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METRONEWS
IS TRUDEAU A CLOSE TALKER?
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Your essential daily news | WEEKEND, NOVEMBER 20-22, 2015 | High -6°C/Low -10°C Cloudy

POP UP FOR PARIS

MEG CRANE/FOR WINNIPEG

Sentruhl's French cuisine weekend will raise money for the Red Cross metroNEWS

Winnipeg a 'best trip'

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Magazine praises human rights museum and the Forks

Elisha Dacey
Metro | Winnipeg

Winnipeg has been chosen as one of National Geographic's Best Trips of 2016 — the only Canadian city to make the list.

The international magazine called the River City a "multicultural, multilingual metropolis of 800,000" before extolling our many virtues, including the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Forks, Festival du Voyageur and the skating trails.

Of course, they mentioned the cold, but not the mosquitoes.

"Actually, that's pretty awesome," said Regan Buzov, 28, at the Forks on Thursday where she was studying Travel Manitoba's tourist information.

"I'm always trying to get members of my family here, from back home in Croatia, but all they know about Winnipeg is the cold," she said, adding she moved to Winnipeg a few years ago to study social work. "Maybe this will help me convince them."

According to National Geographic, the best time to go is "June through September for farmers markets and outdoor concerts and events like the Winnipeg Folk Festival; December to March for skating and tobogganing at Arctic Glacier Winter Park."

National Geographic singled out the Alt Hotel (making a mention of Winnipeg photographer Bryan Scott's installation in the lobby) as the best place to stay, Capital Grill and Bar as a great place to eat and Cree-ations as the place to shop for local artisan wares. The list also recommends reading Carol Shields and checking out a social.

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Drought in South Africa could make rooibos teas scarce and pricey. **Business**

What a difference a day makes

From 3 C and green grass to -8 C and snow, wind and more snow. Manitobans took to social media to document the province's first snowfall this season, which was a nasty piece of work by Mother Nature. Slick roads and high winds caused a 17-car pileup on Bishop Grandin Boulevard on Wednesday night, and the TransCanada Highway was eventually closed Thursday. **ELISHA DACEY** METRO

Candace Affleck posted this photo of her in her **winter gear.** CANDACE AFFLECK/INSTAGRAM

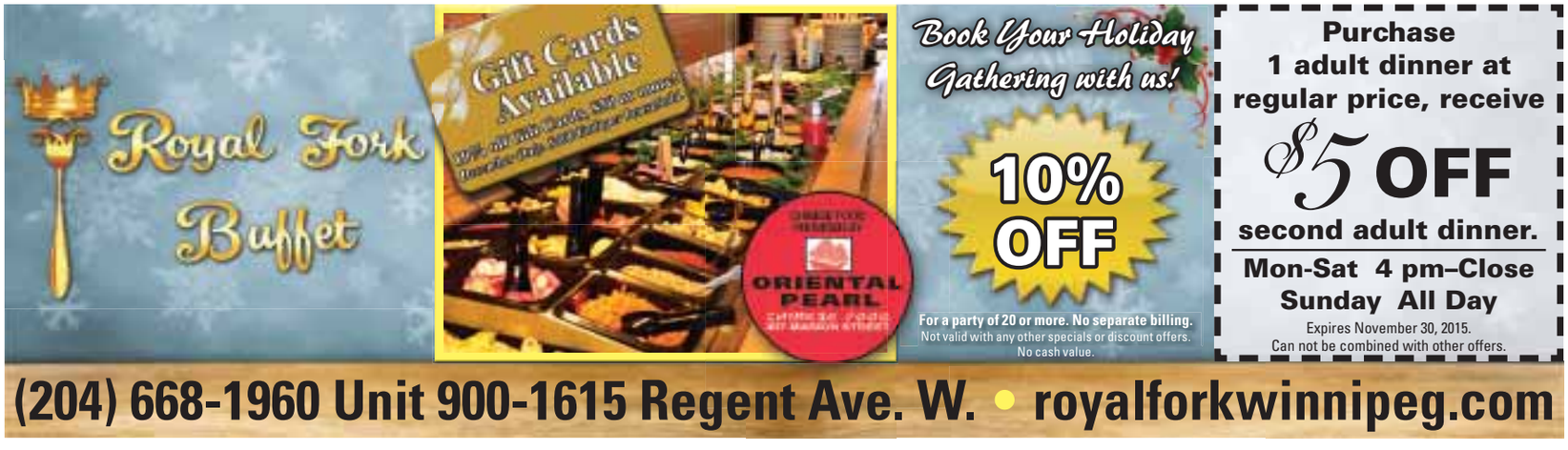
Manitoba RCMP sent out this picture of **jackknifed semis on the TransCanada Highway** near the Manitoba/Ontario border Thursday morning. RCMP/HANDOUT

This image shows off **the snow's prettier side,** despite the nasty weather. OFLEMONSANDLEMONADE/INSTAGRAM

It's the **first snow clearing of the season** for Wallace Desmarais, custodian at St. John's Cathedral. SHEL ZOLKEWICH/FOR METRO

Pricilla Kerr caught this photo of a driveway being shovelled on her street Thursday morning. PRICILLA KERR/INSTAGRAM

Seven-year-old Sukhman Chahal clears his walkway before heading to Luxton School in Winnipeg's north end. SHEL ZOLKEWICH/FOR METRO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Winnipeg folk-country trio Sweet Alibi will celebrate the release of their third album Walking in the Dark with a party at the West End Cultural Centre. SOUND STRATEGY/CONTRIBUTED

Sweet Alibi takes a turn for the dark

FOLK MUSIC

Group uses bittersweet memories for inspiration

Nigel Moore
For Metro | Winnipeg

Winnipeg's own Sweet Alibi will celebrate the release of their third album Walking in the Dark with a lively show at the West End Cultural Centre this Friday.

The concert will feature dancers and a children's choir. But for one member of the folk-country group in particular, the night will be bittersweet.

Amber Quesnel lost her mother, Becky, in November of last year after a long fight with pancreatic cancer. "When we were on the road, she was always in the hospital," said Quesnel.

Speaking to Metro Winnipeg on Remembrance Day, the first anniversary of her mother's death, Quesnel said the new album is deeply personal to her and bandmates Jess Rae Ayre and Michelle Anderson. It's dedicated to Becky's memory, in fact. "We are really close; so when something is happening in our lives, we all sort of take it in," said Quesnel. "The driving forces of this album were a lot of personal stuff: my mom dying, sobriety and us being on the road."

Among the first songs Quesnel wrote after her mother passed away was one called Walking in the Dark. "When I showed it to Jess and Michelle, they thought it should go on the new album. A couple of weeks later, they let me know that they both wanted it to be the title track," she said.

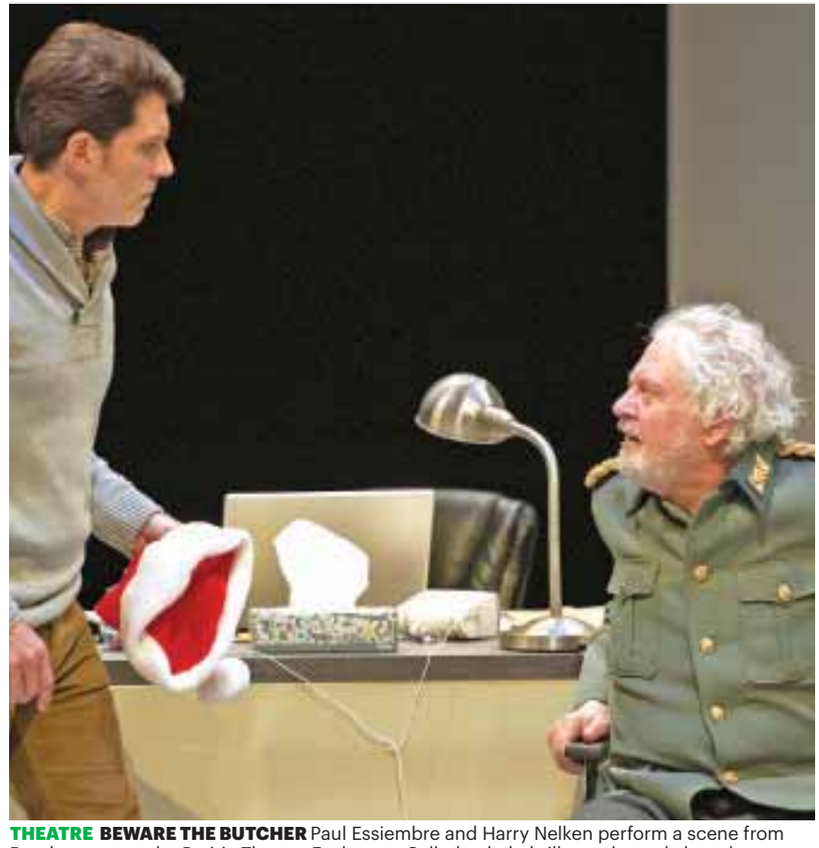
Nature and the environment also provided Sweet Alibi with inspiration. On the new song Moving to the Country, they sing about building a log cabin in the woods and sleeping in the forest. And on the album cover Rae Ayre wears bull horns, Anderson wears deer antlers and Quesnel wears a bird mask she and her sister made, which she said will appear at the show on Friday.

"It's about trying to make a difference in your environment and in your community, and to stop being so materialistic," explained Quesnel.

> **The driving forces of this album were a lot of personal stuff: my mom dying, sobriety and us being on the road.** Amber Quesnel

CHECK IT OUT

Tickets are $20 at the West End Cultural Centre, Music Trader, the Winnipeg Folk Festival Music Store or Ticketfly.com.



THEATRE BEWARE THE BUTCHER Paul Essiembre and Harry Nelken perform a scene from Butcher, now at the Prairie Theatre Exchange. Called a dark thriller and raved about by reviewers across Canada, the play explores themes of justice and peace in the face of unspeakable crimes. Artistic director Robert Metcalfe said "When I read the script...it was impossible not to be pulled into this amazing roller coaster ride. I knew right away we had to do it." The show runs through Dec. 6. BRUCE MONK/PRAIRIE THEATRE EXCHANGE

Opening opportunity a surprise: Elwins

CONCERT

Indie band to play Friday at the Good Will

Nigel Moore
For Metro | Winnipeg

The chance to open in Winnipeg for Guelph art-punk legends the Constantines came as a surprise to the Elwins.

The young indie-pop band from Keswick, Ont., will warm up the crowd at The Good Will this Friday.

Elwins guitarist/keyboardist Feurd says it will be a one-off. He, along with vocalist/guitarist Matthew Sweeney and drummer Travis Stokl, whom he met in high school, and bassist Frankie Figliomenii were originally scheduled to play a show in the 'Peg as part of their Western Canada tour to promote their sophomore album Play For Keeps. "And then the opportunity arose to open for the Constantines and we said, 'That sounds amazing; let's do that!'" he said with a laugh.

Feurd's not even sure how it came to be. He knows of no music-biz association between the two bands. "Maybe someone from our label or management knows their management," he suggested, adding he and his bandmates are looking forward to meeting the Cons.

The Elwins pack as much fun and as many pop hooks as they can into their live shows. "We like to get the audience involved," said Feurd. "We get people clapping and singing along and that sort of stuff."

Tickets are $20 at Music Trader, The Good Will and Ticketfly.com.

From left, Feurd, Matthew Sweeney, Travis Stokl and Frankie Figliomenii of the Elwins. TAKE AIM MEDIA/CONTRIBUTED

WINNIPEG ORCHESTRA

Kids are taking over concert hall Sunday

Donna Maxwell
For Metro | Winnipeg

If the symphony has images of fancily dressed folks adopting rigid positions in their seats dancing through your head, you really need to head out to the Centennial Concert Hall this Sunday.

The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra will be putting on a kids' concert, performing scores to classic Christmas movies The Snowman and The Bear, while the movies play on a screen above them.

According to conductor Julian Pelicano, the younger audience embraces the symphonic experience wholeheartedly.

"The whole concert hall is overrun by something like a thousand and something kids, and they're doing all kinds of stuff," Pelicano said.

"It's a great feeling to know that there are all these kids out there and we can hear them, we can see them and it's great when they're just a little bit active and we can just tell they're enjoying it. We love the response from the kids."

He said most kids know the movies very well and are mesmerized by them, and they watch, and react, to everything in unison.

"At the funny parts they all laugh together just like at the movie theatre and when something really amazing or something cool happens they all sort of gasp.... The kids just react very naturally to the films," he said.

One hour prior to the show, kids can take part in pre-concert activities that include conducting symphony musicians and spending time in the instrument petting zoo where they can play the orchestral instruments.

And Pelicano said no child is too young to come."We encourage people to bring babies as well … a lot of people think 'I have a baby and a five-year-old so I can't come 'cause the baby might cry'. In fact it doesn't really matter, the kids all make noise throughout, they're eating snacks throughout…they're talking. It's really a fascinating experience and I love doing it."

TICKETS

Pre-concert activities start at 1 p.m. and the Great West Life Kids Concert starts at 2 p.m. Tickets are available through the WSO box office at 204-949-3999 or wso.ca, or through Ticketmaster.

Conductor Julian Pelicano says performing scores to kids' movies is something he loves doing. CONTRIBUTED

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Gallic gourmet and goodness

CUISINE

Sentruhl Project to donate 15% to aid Paris

Meg Crane
for Metro | Winnipeg

The Sentruhl Project will celebrate French cuisine and raise money to support Paris this weekend.

The ongoing pop-up restaurant, which has been running on weekends for six weeks, features food from different regions of Canada and around the world.

"We decided we would do our heritage dinners," says Spencer Smith, one of the four co-founders. They planned meals dedicated to the countries Smith and partners Gordon Bailey, Traci Bailey and Sean Audet's families are from.

France was already scheduled for next weekend when Smith was at home Nov. 13, waiting to hear from his best friend, currently living in Paris.

"For that two hours, before I could reach him, when I found out the news on Friday night, I was really, really shaken. That feeling I had, people over there are living that still," Smith says.

As chefs, the crisis hit close to home for The Sentruhl Project team because a lot of food comes from the country, says Smith.

With French food already on the menu, they decided to donate 15 per cent of the proceeds from each $58 meal and all gratuities to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

"It's a great way to tie in a donation to France specifically, but also show people that even not in a timely crisis like this, you can donate to the Red Cross. They're always working towards the greater good of humanity," Smith says.

Like all meals they create, there will be local flavours.

"For dessert, I'm making floating island, which is a very classic French dessert," says Smith. Traditionally, it's merengue floating on créme anglaise. "We're going to do our own little spin on that with Saskatoon berries, because we're in Manitoba, after all."

Gordon Bailey, Sean Audet and Traci Bailey getting a Sentruhl meal ready. CONTRIBUTED

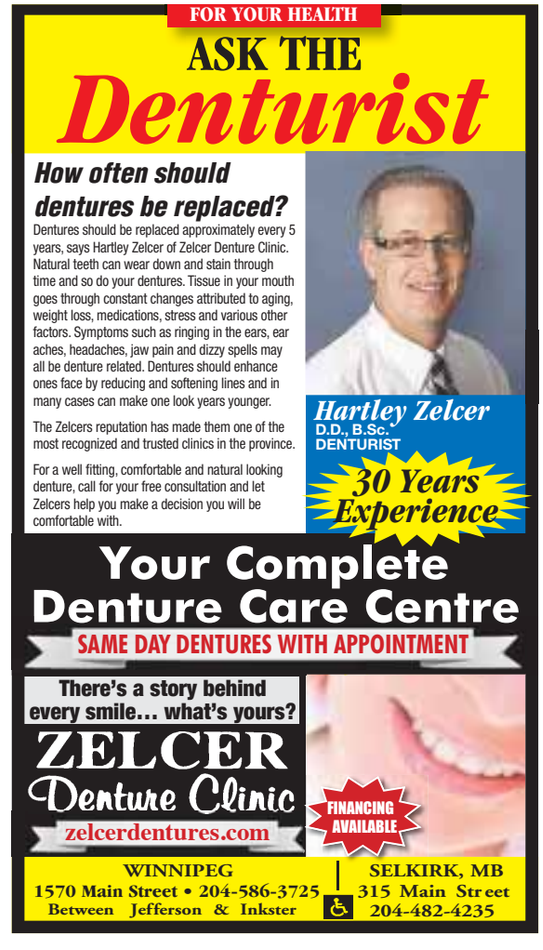
> **For dessert, I'm making floating island, which is a very classic French dessert ... we're going to do our own little spin on that with Saskatoon berries, because we're in Manitoba, after all.**
> Spencer Smith

LES NOM-NOMS

- Reservations are required and can be booked by calling 204-590-6818 or emailing sentruhl.wpg@gmail.com.
- Each week, the menu changes.
- Allergies can be accommodated with notice to the chefs.

ASSISTANCE

- The French Red Cross began assisting people in Paris right after the attacks on Nov. 13.
- More than 340 volunteers were went out immediately.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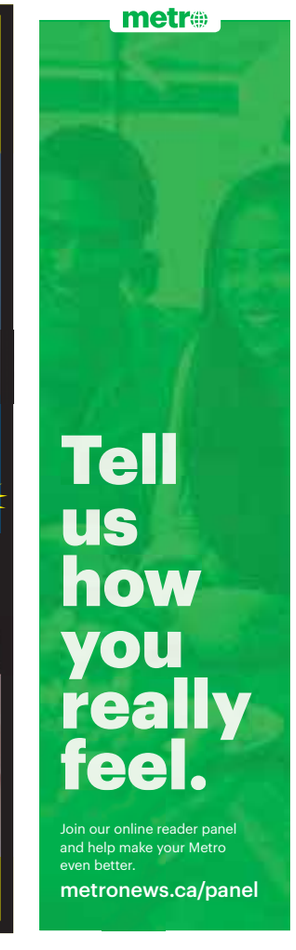

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CYCLING

Politician calling for one-metre law

A Manitoba politician is pushing for a new law that would require motorists to stay at least one metre away from cyclists whenever they pass them.

Dave Gaudreau, an NDP government backbencher, is putting forward a private member's bill this week that would require vehicles to obey a one-metre buffer zone around people on bikes.

> **We all have our kids out on the road, and I want them to have that little extra room.**
> Dave Gaudreau

It would change the current Highway Traffic Act, which only requires motorists to keep "a safe distance" when passing cyclists.

The one-metre rule would provide a specific distance that motorists can visualize, Gaudreau said.

"We all have our kids out on the road, and I want them to have that little extra room that (drivers) might forget."

The one-metre rule has been promoted for years by local cycling groups, and took effect this year in Ontario. The legislation there penalizes offending drivers through $110 fines and two demerit points.

Private member's bills rarely become law, but Gaudreau is hoping for support from both his government colleagues and members of the opposition.

"I'm sure they'll have some support for it. They're in the same situation. They want to be safe when they're riding and when their children are on the road."

Gaudreau has discussed his bill with Manitoba Transportation, and the proposal is expected to come up for debate in the legislature in the new year.

Gaudreau, who represents the suburban constituency of St. Norbert in south Winnipeg, says he's been clipped by a car while cycling.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

St. Norbert MLA Dave Gaudreau wants to see Manitoba enforce a law similar to the one in Ontario. THINKSTOCK

Smash Mouth the dog is now being cared for at a rescue shelter. COURTESY D'ARCY'S A.R.C.

Dog with trapped jaw on road to recovery

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Wandered six days in rural country before his capture

Members of a local animal rescue shelter say a dog was found wandering in rural Manitoba with a large steel snap trap embedded in its jaw.

D'Arcy's A.R.C. said members of the community on Peguis First Nation first spotted the dog on Nov. 6.

It was nearly a week before they were able to capture the hurt, frightened animal, especially after a well-meaning would-be rescuer managed to get close enough, and accidentally grabbed the trap instead of the dog.

The no-kill shelter says the dog, now named Smash Mouth, was captured on Nov. 12 and taken to Gimli Vet Clinic, where he was treated before being taken to D'Arcy's A.R.C. for recovery.

"This rescue effort is an excellent example of co-operation between the community, the Provincial Vet, and the rescue community," D'Arcy Johnston, founder of D'Arcy's A.R.C. said. "Without the combined efforts, this dog could have spent much longer at large with critical injuries."

> **This rescue effort is an excellent example of co-operation.**
> D'Arcy Johnston

Smash Mouth still needs follow-up care and may need reconstructive surgery, according to the veterinarians at Birchwood Animal Hospital, where he is now being treated.

Johnston said the number of major injuries they've seen is on the rise.

"We have seen an increase in major injuries this year. We see animals coming in with serious injuries that are both a result of accidents, like car-accident injuries, and other more intentional actions," he said.

"This reminds me of the dog, Lemon Lime, that we rescued with her throat cut last summer. The problem is not in any specific area but it is a problem province wide."

Anyone able to help with Smash Mouth's care can donate by calling 204-888-2266 or searching for D'Arcy's A.R.C. online at CanadaHelps.org. METRO

Inuit artist Irene Avaalaaqiaq Tiktaalaaq created this hanging, part of a collection lent to the Winnipeg Art Gallery by the Nunavut government. WINNIPEG ART GALLERY/TWITTER

Nunavut gifts fine art, $500K

CO-OPERATION

Collaborating with Manitoba in cultural, energy spheres

The governments of Manitoba and Nunavut are strengthening their ties in order to strengthen both regions, said Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger.

Selinger and Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna announced that they have agreed to extend a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU).

"We are committed to working with our neighbours to enhance opportunities to Nunavummiut, and this memorandum of understanding helps strengthen co-operation in a number of key areas," said Taptuna.

These areas include health policy, program information sharing, and the exploration of clean energy alternatives, as well as through education, sporting and cultural activities.

"We share many common goals, such as the protection of the environment, improved health care and the push for clean energy," Selinger said.

The provinces will continue exploring transmission line options between Manitoba and Nunavut. This includes looking at the possibility of building a winter road and ways to improve trade through an Arctic gateway.

Included in the MOU is that the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG) will receive thousands of pieces of fine art from Nunavut.

"The Government of Nunavut has an incredible collection and the Winnipeg Art Gallery is pleased to provide it with a temporary home," said Dr. Stephen Borys, director and CEO of the WAG.

The governments of Nunavut and Manitoba will each donate $500,000 to support research, documentation and exhibition of the artwork, which will include special programming at the WAG.

"Nunavut and Manitoba share more than a border; we share family, cultural, trade and transportation ties," said Taptuna. METRO

> **The Government of Nunavut has an incredible collection** and the Winnipeg Art Gallery is pleased to provide it with a temporary home
>
> Dr. Stephen Borys, director and CEO of the WAG

CAA MANITOBA

Roadside assistance app launched

CAA Manitoba announced this week they've launched Service Tracker, an online tool that gives real-time updates to members regarding roadside assistance requests.

For no additional charge, members will be able to watch the status of their request from the moment it is received by CAA until the request is completed or cancelled, which can also be done through Service Tracker, said CAA Manitoba in a news release.

After making a request, members are shown when their call goes from being assigned, to being dispatched, to being en route, to arrival, according to an online video about the service.

The driver's estimated time of arrival is automatically updated on the service's screen, so members know how long the estimated wait is as it changes.

Service Tracker also has a map that follows the assigned CAA vehicle and shows nearby approved auto repair services facilities.

The service was created based on member feedback about CAA.

"Our members have told us they're on the go, and they're busy," said Mike Mager, president and CEO of CAA Manitoba.

"Our job is to get them on their way as quickly as possible, with minimal interruption to their day.

"Service Tracker will allow them more flexibility to do exactly that."

In Manitoba, the service is only available in Winnipeg and Brandon, but there are plans to expand it throughout the province over the next few years, CAA announced in a news release. METRO

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IN BRIEF

Group of bikers punch man in car after U-turn

A Winnipeg man was injured after an ill-timed U-turn ticked off a group of bikers.

Police said the man was driving his Toyota Camry near Daly Street North and Mulvey Avenue on Oct. 18 at about 5 p.m. He made a U-turn at Mulvey and continued on his way.

Suddenly a group of about 10 men on motorcycles surrounded his car and tried to get in. Eventually, the driver's side door was opened and the man was punched, causing serious injury, said police.

Police said the motorcycles were speeding and nearly smashed into the Camry after the U-turn, which is what apparently set off the fight. Anyone with information is asked to call 204-986-2877. METRO

Women tells conference of abuse by adopted family

Ending the sexual exploitation of children was the focus of a special gathering at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg.

International agency Beyond Borders organized the meeting to discuss ways to combat what it calls a growing problem.

One of the keynote speakers is a First Nations woman who goes by the name "Great White Owl Woman."

She says members of her adopted family in rural Manitoba started to sexually abuse her when she was just five years old. She now has two children in college and is a college graduate herself.

Child victims account for more than half the sexual assaults reported to police.

"Grandpa, uncles, church members, teachers, my mom's boyfriends, and guests at parties abused me," she said. "I was constant entertainment for anyone, because it was known I wouldn't fight, I wouldn't cry, I wouldn't tell." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mosque dinners a sellout attraction

FUNDRAISING

Foodorama showcases cultural communities

Shel Zolkewich
For Metro | Winnipeg

Diners line up for a feast at a recent Foodorama event. CONTRIBUTED

Guests will enjoy a feast of chicken tagine, lentil soup, zaalouk (eggplant and tomato salad) and baklava this Saturday as Moroccan Night happens at the Waverley Grand Mosque Gym.

The sold-out event is part of a monthly culinary program — called Foodorama — hosted by the Manitoba Islamic Association.

"There is a ton of food, so much food," said Tasneem Vali, office manager for the association. The fundraising dinners are hosted by a different community each four to six weeks, showcasing the foods of a specific country. All the food is donated and the cooking done by the host community while proceeds go to support activities at the mosque.

"We do this to keep the community cohesive," Vali said. "There has been so much cooperation and sharing. Food really brings people together."

Past Foodorama events have showcased the foods of Bangladesh, Libya and Egypt. There's room for 300 diners and tickets sell out in just a few days. For the Libyan dinner, takeaway boxes were also offered at a reduced price.

Each hosting community offers a presentation before the meal to highlight the culture and customs of the country. Vali said some have even dressed in their traditional clothing for the evening. Members of the hosting community are encouraged to sell tickets to those outside their community so the evening takes on a truly multicultural flare.

Sometimes men are asked to sit on one side and women on the other for the meal (Muslim women often eat separately from men). Cultural customs are always respected at the dinners.

The next Foodorama happens Dec. 19, hosted by the Ethiopian community. In the new year, diners will have the opportunity to feast on Palestinian fare.

Tickets are $20 per person or $100 per family. For more information call 204 256-1347 or visit the Manitoba Islamic Association online at miaonline.org.

> **We do this to keep the community cohesive. There has been so much co-operation and sharing.**
> Tasneem Vali, Manitoba Islamic Association

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Duffy's friend takes stand

IN COURT

Contracts and payouts discussed at senator's trial

Gerald Donohue wasn't a professional speechwriter or researcher, didn't have any particular public policy background and wasn't the employee or officer of any company.

But over the span of three years, the longtime friend of Sen. Mike Duffy took in roughly $65,000 in taxpayer money for a variety of contracts, directing the money through a firm owned by his wife and son.

He also signed several cheques on behalf of the firm to other individuals and companies that Duffy wanted paid for Senate work — an intern, a makeup artist, speechwriters.

$65K

Amount of the contracts awarded to Sen. Mike Duffy's friend Gerald Donohue over three years.

Donohue's testimony Thursday marked the winding down of the Crown's fraud, breach of trust and bribery case against Duffy. The senator has pleaded not guilty to all 31 counts.

The Crown alleges the $65,000 in contracts awarded to Donohue was used as a slush fund for Duffy to pay for services that wouldn't pass muster with the Senate.

By video link from his home in an Ottawa suburb, the witness answered prosecutor Mark Holmes' questions about his relationship with Duffy. The two met in the late 1980s at local Ottawa TV station CJOH — Donohue was a human resources manager, Duffy a host.

Over the years, the two men kept up a friendship of sorts. Donohue was a sounding board for Duffy, who would call to talk to him about a variety of issues.

After Duffy entered the Senate, Donohue said Duffy continued to pick his brain — this time for pay. He was asked to research the aging population, which he did on the Internet, or to come up with ideas for a speech on why Duffy was a Conservative.

Donohue conceded that he signed cheques to other Duffy service providers, even though he had no signing authority at the firm. He also revealed that those cheques were written off by the family companies, first called Maple Ridge Media and then Ottawa ICF.

Donohue said he got upset with the Senate administrators in 2012 when they refused to stop sending cheques to him personally, rather than to the firms.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sen. Mike Duffy makes his way to the courthouse as his trial resumes in Ottawa on Thursday.
ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

POLITICS

MP denies using slur

A Conservative MP from Saskatchewan says he denies calling a provincial NDP candidate a "whore."

A reporter from Moose Jaw posted a month-old video online Thursday that shows Tom Lukiwski urging his supporters to help Saskatchewan Party legislature member Greg Lawrence in April's provincial election.

Lukiwski is heard to say: "We've got to get Greg back elected. He's too important of an MLA to let go down to an NDP whore just because of a bad boundary."

A debate broke out on Twitter as to whether he said "whore" or "horde," meaning a large group or gang. Lukiwski said it was the latter.

"At no point did I use any sort of profanity to describe the NDP," he said in a statement. Lukiwski added he reached out to the NDP candidate, Karen Purdy, to assure her of that.

Purdy said she believes Lukiwski used "whore" and wants an apology.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Whale-watcher's body recovered

LEVIATHAN II

Surfers find man's remains on beach at Vargas Island

The Leviathan II waits to be towed into Tofino, B.C., from near Vargas Island, B.C., in October. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The body of an Australian man has been found off Vancouver Island's west coast, bringing to six the number of people who are confirmed dead after a whale-watching boat flipped on Oct. 25.

The BC Coroners Service said Thursday the body of 27-year-old Raveshan Morgan Pillay was recovered on the shore of Vargas Island, not far from Tofino, B.C.

Twenty-seven tourists and crew were tossed into the water, about 15 kilometres northwest of the tourist town, when a wave broadsided the Leviathan II, a 20-metre whale-watching boat.

The five people who were confirmed dead on the night of the incident were all from the United Kingdom and ranged in age from 18 to 76.

An extensive search for Pillay turned up nothing until surfers reported finding a body Wednesday night on a beach on Vargas Island, close to where the vessel flipped over.

Tofino Mayor Josie Osborne said Pillay's family travelled from Sydney to Tofino after the accident, but returned to Australia last week.

The Coroners Service, Transportation Safety Board and RCMP are continuing to investigate the incident.

Life-jackets were not required on the vessel and it appeared the tourists were not wearing them at the time, an initial coroner's investigation found.

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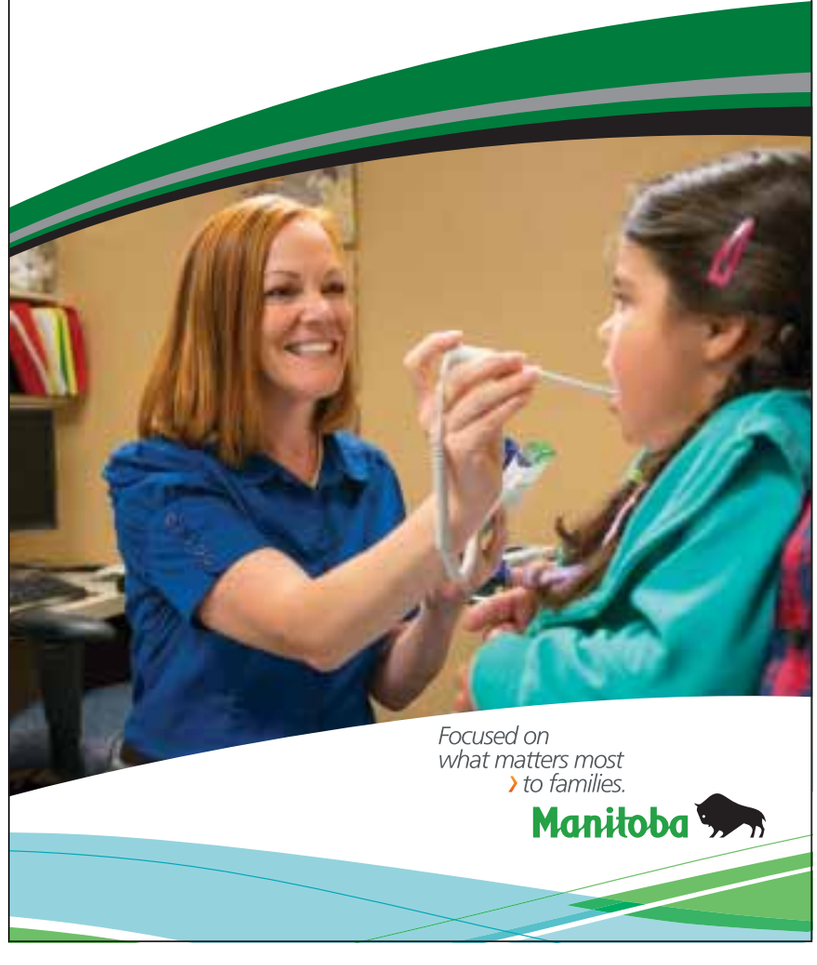

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FAITH

Hijab Day targets misconceptions

Members of Halifax's Muslim community are confronting misconceptions about their faith by holding an information session about the hijab this weekend.

Anyone who stops by the Halifax Central Library for Hijab Day on Saturday will be invited to try one on.

Abdelkader Tayebi, imam for the Ummah Mosque in Halifax, says he hopes the first-person experience will help people better understand those who wear the hijab, which covers the head and neck but not the face.

"It's no longer something that is related to a minority or a couple of people, so it has surfaced as a matter of concern to Canadians," he said. "It's being seen as something imported from outside, from the Middle East, whereas it is now a Canadian thing."

Tayebi says there are many mistaken ideas surrounding the hijab, including the notion that men are forcing women to wear them. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CELEBRITY

Trudeau making fans swoon abroad

Justin Trudeau was mobbed by a crowd of several hundred shrieking fans at the APEC summit in Manila, Philippines, in a scene more fitting a rock star than a political leader.

The celebrity appeal of Canada's new prime minister was on full display Thursday as men and women crowded around Trudeau, hoping for a glimpse, a handshake and a snippet of video on their phones.

"He so handsome," said one young fan. "He's like Superman," said another.

His appeal to local residents appeared to have little to do with his government policies or his famous father. Instead, it seemed they just like his looks.

"He makes us swoon," said Chin-Chin Domingo, who used the Tagalog word "kilig" to describe Trudeau's effects on the crowd. "It's butterflies in the stomach. That's how we feel."

Jono Lyn Cadayong was exuberant after getting a handshake from Trudeau. "I'm speechless. He has nice eyes. I will not wash my hand."

Squeals signalled Trudeau's arrival at a media briefing room where he held a news conference to conclude his day at the APEC summit.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Fans greet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Manila, Philippines on Thursday. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Syrian refugees gather outside their embassy waiting to apply for passports or to renew their old ones in Amman, Jordan, in September. Some of them may be among the 25,000 people resettled in Canada. RAAD ADAYLEH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Government hunts for winter housing

REFUGEES

Notice seeks temporary sites for 500 to 3,000 people

The federal government is searching for temporary winter housing for thousands of people across Canada days before the expected unveiling of its plan to bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees by year's end.

Public Works and Government Services is establishing a list of facilities that can provide winterized housing at various sites across Canada.

The sites will have to accommodate between 500 and 3,000 people for as long as three months, according to a notice posted Thursday morning.

"The Government of Canada is seeking interested companies that have the capacity, capability and availability to provide leasing, management and servicing of temporary winterized lodgings for groups of 500-3,000 people by early December 2015 at sites to be confirmed," the notice reads.

It's not yet known if the request is specific to the needs of the expected refugees. The Public Works employee responsible for the notice refused to comment.

But the notice states the government requires lodging for both individuals and large families for up to three months, beginning next month. The timing and the requirements strongly suggest a temporary refuge for people fleeing Syria's bloody civil war.

The sites must be completely self-contained, including energy generation, sewer, and waste management, and provide space for an information centre and offices for management personnel, among other requirements.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PREPARATION

Saskatchewan to set up settlement centre

Days after Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall said Ottawa should suspend its plan to bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees, his province will establish a refugee settlement centre to co-ordinate the arrival of refugees.

The premier says it's important to ensure that refugees make a successful transition to life in Canada.

CIGARETTES

Squeezy filters spark worry

One of Canada's largest tobacco companies has introduced a new type of menthol cigarette the Canadian Cancer Society worries could get more teens and young adults hooked on smoking.

The cigarettes, sold by Rothmans Benson & Hedges Inc., contain a capsule of liquid menthol inside their filters, which a smoker can squeeze to get a burst of flavour while taking a puff.

Four brands of the smokes are being sold in parts of Canada for the first time, although squeezable menthol filters have been available in other countries for years, said Rob Cunningham, a senior policy analyst at the Canadian Cancer Society.

Cigarettes with a new squeezable menthol capsule inside the filter. THE CANADIAN PRESS

"And we're concerned that this is a new gimmick that will be attractive to kids, that will contribute to experimentation and addiction," he said, explaining menthol can soothe the throat and soften the harshness of tobacco smoke.

A spokesperson for Rothmans Benson & Hedges wrote in an email Wednesday, "Our products are not marketed, or made for sale, to anyone under the legal age."

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ATTACKS

ISIL striving for international reactions

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group has dramatically expanded its theatre of operations from its hub in Syria and Iraq, executing or inspiring a series of attacks across three continents that claimed more than 800 lives this year.

The mayhem created by those attacks — including the downing of a Russian airliner and a killing spree in the heart of Paris — attracts the kind of attention that the extremist group thrives on.

ISIL, which has recently lost territory to U.S.-backed forces in Syria and Iraq, seeks to boost its credentials with spectacular acts of violence that attract recruits.

The scope of recent attacks and number of those killed and wounded demonstrate a level of sophistication and a determination that has shocked even closer observers of ISIL.

Power

The attacks reveal the extents to which the group is willing to go to surpass al-Qaida and prove itself the most dominant jihadi movement on the planet.

The attacks also demonstrate ISIL's ability to deliver multiple blows to an array of forces aligned against it. Last month's downing of the Russian plane, for instance, targeted both Russia and Egypt, whose governments have been fighting the group.

Thousands of people have been killed by IS in Syria in and Iraq this year in mass executions, bombings and other attacks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Syrian President Bashar Assad HANDOUT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Saudis try to unite Syrian opposition

MILITARY RESPONSE

Earlier summit failed to select groups to leave out of ceasefire

Saudi Arabia will host a conference in mid-December to try to unite the Syrian opposition ahead of new peace talks, a key issue in efforts to end the nearly five-year civil war, the country's UN ambassador said Thursday.

Saudi Ambassador Abdallah Al-Moualimi said his country will be trying to bring different strands of the opposition "together for a united voice."

Last Saturday, foreign ministers from about 20 nations agreed in Vienna to an ambitious yet incomplete plan that sets a Jan. 1 deadline for the start of negotiations between Syrian President Bashar Assad's government and opposition groups. Within six months, the negotiations are to establish a "credible, inclusive and non-sectarian" transitional government that would set a schedule for drafting a new constitution and holding a free and fair UN-supervised election within 18 months.

Neither the Syrian government nor opposition groups were present at the talks, which brought together the main foreign backers of both sides.

Staffan de Mistura, the UN special envoy for Syria who represented the UN at the Vienna talks, told reporters that a ceasefire in Syria is now more likely because the countries participating in talks in Vienna "have an interest in seeing a ceasefire taking place."

In Vienna, the foreign ministers failed to reach consensus on which groups — other than the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Qaida affiliates — would not be eligible to be part of a ceasefire. Jordan was chosen to oversee a process that would identify which groups could be considered for identification as terrorists.

> **If we want peace, we have to find a way of getting along with Assad.**
> Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo

De Mistura said the Vienna participants want "as large as possible a ceasefire" and that the ministers agreed to disagree about a number of issues — including about the future of Assad.

Portraying himself as the only viable alternative to jihadi rule, Assad has labeled all his enemies "terrorists" — a designation that, in the wake of the recent attacks on civilians by ISIL, may find greater resonance.

Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo said cutting a deal with Assad would be the "lesser evil."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TERRORISM

Suicide bombers can also be women

The woman who blew herself up with an explosive vest in a suburban Paris apartment during a police operation Wednesday was far from the world's first female suicide bomber.

In the Palestinian territories, about a dozen women have carried out suicide attacks against Israelis since 2002 — including 27-year-old paramedic Wafa Idris, who blew herself up in downtown Jerusalem on Jan. 27, 2002. It was unclear if she planned to commit suicide.

Kurdish women have carried out several suicide attacks in Turkey since the 1980s, as have female members of leftist groups in their campaign against the government. The most recent attack occurred on Jan. 6, when a Turkish leftist group claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at an Istanbul police station that killed an officer and wounded another.

A decade ago, al-Qaida in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi sent four members of his group — which would later morph into ISIL — to carry out bombings in his home country of Jordan.

In that Nov. 9, 2005, assault, Sajida al-Rishawi and her newly-wed husband, Ali al-Shamari, entered the ground-floor ballroom of Amman's Radisson SAS hotel where hundreds of people were celebrating a wedding. Al-Shamari set off his explosive belt in the crowd. Al-Rishawi fled.

Al-Zarqawi later claimed responsibility for the attack and mentioned a woman being involved, leading Jordanian officials to arrest al-Rishawi. Several days later, she appeared on Jordanian state television, opening a body-length overcoat to reveal two crude explosive belts.

Al-Rishawi was executed earlier this year after ISIL militants killed 1st Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh, whose Jordanian warplane was shot down over Syria in December. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RUSSIA

Two female suicide bombers from Chechnya — belonging to a group known as the "black widows" in Russia — were to blame for the 2010 bombings of the Moscow metro, which killed some 40 people.

Iranian students fill in registration forms indicating their **readiness to carry out suicide attacks.** THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

French gendarmes enforce the **Vigipirate plan**, France's national security alert system, throughout Paris. France revealed on Nov. 19 it will spend an extra 600 million euros ($641 million US) next year to ramp up security after the Paris attacks. President Francois Hollande announced this week that France is freezing plans to cut troop numbers through 2019. At the same time, the country will add 8,500 law enforcement jobs including 5,000 new police. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Opera brings warmth to France's dark hour

Paris

Canada-based performers set for opening of Versailles show

Marco Chown Oved
IN PARIS

Barely 48 hours after the horrifying attacks in Paris, members of Toronto's Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Opera Atelier dance company faced a very difficult choice.

Their presentation of Jean-Baptiste Lully's 17th-century opera, Armide, was scheduled to go forward at the Chateau de Versailles just outside Paris, but the companies weren't going to force anyone to get on the plane.

Overcoming their fears, in a show of solidarity, and as a measure of their professionalism, every single one of the 75 musicians, dancers and technicians boarded that flight.

"When we started hearing the news, it was panic in the early hours, the borders are closed and a state of emergency. Everyone was concerned," said ballet dancer Jennifer Nichols.

> **I think everyone, unanimously ... said we're doing this together**
> Ballet dancer Jennifer Nichols

"But once we heard that the company was moving forward with the tour, ... we wanted to be in solidarity with the French people."

"There was a lot of trepidation," agreed Lucas Harris, who plays a type of lute called a theorbo. "But everyone else was going and we didn't want to let them down."

Harris and his wife, Geneviève Gilardeau, who plays violin in the orchestra, went one step further than most of their colleagues: they also brought their four-year-old daughter, Daphnée.

"All the extra security makes us a little uncomfortable," said Harris. But in the week of rehearsals since their arrival, they haven't regretted the choice.

The Toronto performers are now ready for opening night Friday, a performance that's being dedicated to the victims at the Bataclan concert hall.

INTELLIGENCE

Chemical weapons may pose threat to the West: Officials

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group is aggressively pursuing development of chemical weapons, setting up a branch dedicated to research and experiments with the help of scientists from Iraq, Syria and elsewhere in the region, according to Iraqi and U.S. intelligence officials.

Their quest raises an alarming scenario for the West, given the determination to strike major cities that the group showed with its bloody attack last week in Paris. U.S. intelligence officials don't believe ISIL has the capability to develop sophisticated weapons like nerve gas that are most suited for a terrorist attack on a civilian target. So far the group has used mustard gas on the battlefield in Iraq and Syria.

> **They now have complete freedom to select locations for their labs and production sites.**
> Iraqi intelligence official

Still, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls on Thursday warned that Islamic extremists might at some point use chemical or biological weapons.

"Terrorism hit France not because of what it is doing in Iraq and Syria ... but for what it is," Valls told the lower house of Parliament. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Migrants wait to cross the Greece-Macedonia border, near the village of Idomeni. Countries along the migrant route through the Balkans have begun tightening restrictions on the wave people crossing their borders by allowing entry only to those fleeing war. SAKIS MITROLIDIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Closed borders in Balkan countries create pileups

REFUGEE CRISIS

Thousands of 'economic migrants' stuck between nations

Most nations along Europe's refugee corridor shut their borders Thursday to those not coming from war-torn countries such as Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq, leaving thousands of others seeking a better life in the continent stranded at Balkan border crossings.

The overnight decision triggered the domino effect that both asylum-seekers and European nations had feared given the record number of people fleeing to Europe this year, and new fears after the deadly Paris attacks of possible militants coming in with refugees.

Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia weren't allowing in the so-called economic migrants whose countries aren't shattered by armed struggles and wars.

In the Greek village of Idomeni at the border with Macedonia, police said the border has essentially been shut down to all since Thursday morning. Some 3,000 people are waiting at a camp nearby that provides temporary shelter for those heading north through the Balkans.

> **We're trapped They won't let my family across. We have no money, and we're waiting without any idea of what is to happen.**
> Mohammed Mirzam

About 500 people from Iran, Morocco and Algeria gathered on the border line between Greece and Macedonia to protest the closure. As a result, nobody else from the nationalities that Macedonia is letting through — Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis — were able to cross.

Dariush Yazdani, 25, from Tehran, said he was determined to reach Germany, and faced imprisonment were he to return to Iran.

"I will never go back," he said.

On the Serbian border with Macedonia, the Serbs were letting in only migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. And on the Croatia-Serbia border, Croats were only accepting people from those three countries plus Palestine. Slovenia — the next country in the chain — also said it has been turning back the so-called economic migrants.

"This is going to be definitely a challenging situation," UN refugee agency spokeswoman in Serbia Melita Sunjic said. "UNHCR does not think that there is any nation that can be excluded from international protection based on their nationalities, but each case individually should be screened and processed based on the merits of the case."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

YEMEN

Rebels free U.S. captives

Three Americans held captive by Shiite rebels in Yemen's capital have been freed, Oman's state news agency and officials in Yemen said Thursday.

The short English-language statement on the Oman News Agency said only that the U.S. State Department had asked Oman to bring the Americans out of the country. It did not elaborate or provide information on their identities.

However, independent security officials in Yemen and members of the Shiite rebels known as Houthis said the Americans had been detained for at least two months at a Houthi security building in the rebel-held capital of Sanaa.

The rebels and the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they weren't authorized to brief journalists, did not say why the Americans were held.

Two of them were working with the United Nations, the officials said, while offering no information about the third.

The Houthis previously said they had detained two Americans on suspicion of being spies, but it wasn't immediately clear if those two were included in the release.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

5,700

At least 5,700 people have been killed in the conflict in Yemen since March 26, including 830 women and children, the UN said . The war has pushed the country to the brink of famine, as the UN says over 21 million people — 80 per cent of the population — need humanitarian aid.

TERRORISM

China's president decries killing of hostage by ISIL

President Xi Jinping strongly condemned the killing of a Chinese hostage by Islamic State extremists.

ISIL said that it had killed two hostages it was holding for ransom from Norway and China. The Chinese man had been identified as Fan Jinghui, 50, who once taught grade school.

China's Foreign Ministry confirmed his killing early Thursday.

"Terrorists are the common enemy of humankind," Xi said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LIBYA

Benghazi suspect in U.S. asks for release

Lawyers for a suspected Libyan militant charged in 2012 attacks that killed the U.S. Ambassador and three others have asked a judge to send him home.

The lawyers say the U.S. illegally captured and interrogated Ahmed Abu Khattala last year, and that the appropriate remedy for that is for him to be returned to Libya.

U.S. District Court Judge Casey Cooper did not immediately rule on the request.

Khattala was captured by U.S. special forces in a June 2014 nighttime raid.

He was then interrogated for days aboard a Navy ship while being brought to the United States to face charges in the Sept. 2012 attacks on a State Department compound and a nearby CIA annex.

The attacks killed four Americans, including Chris Stevens, the U.S. Ambassador to Libya.

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Fogle sentenced to 15 years

GUILTY PLEA

Ex-Subway pitchman to serve time for sex with minors

Former Subway pitchman Jared Fogle arrives at court Thursday. Fogle pleaded guilty on charges of trading child pornography and paying for sex with minors. MICHAEL CONROY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former Subway pitchman Jared Fogle was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison on Thursday for trading in child pornography and having sex with underage prostitutes, with the judge describing his "perversion and lawlessness" as "extreme."

In a court in Indianapolis, Ind. Judge Tanya Walton Pratt disregarded prosecutors' recommendation that Fogle get 12 1/2 years behind bars, opting for a stiffer term of 15 years and eight months in prison. She could have sentenced him to up to 50 years.

In explaining her sentence, the federal judge noted how fortunate Fogle was to land his lucrative deal to be the face of Subway after he lost more than 200 pounds in college, partly by eating the chain's sandwiches.

"What a gift, to have such a professional windfall fall in your lap," she said. But Pratt said Fogle blew the chance he'd been given by living a double life and pointed out that the crimes he committed weren't victimless.

"The level of perversion and lawlessness exhibited by Mr. Fogle is extreme," Pratt said, who also ordered Fogle to submit to a lifetime of post-prison supervision and pay a $175,000 fine. She recommended that Fogle receive sex offender treatment in prison and said she'll recommend he serve his time at a federal lockup in Littleton, Colorado, that specializes in such treatment.

Fogle didn't show any visible reaction when he heard his sentence, but some family members who were in the courtroom began crying and hugging each other after judge ordered Fogle taken into custody.

Before he was sentenced, the 38-year-old father of two addressed the court, apologizing to his victims and his family and vowing to be a better person.

"I so regret that I let so many of you down," he told the court.

"I want to redeem my life. I want to become a good, decent person. I want to rebuild my life," he said.

Fogle pleaded guilty to one count each of travelling to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a minor and distribution and receipt of child pornography, as per a deal he struck with prosecutors in August, a month after his suburban Indianapolis home was raided.

Fogle's lawyers called John Bradford, a professor of forensic psychiatry at the University of Ottawa in Canada, to testify at Thursday's hearing.

Speaking by phone, Bradford said he analyzed Fogle on Aug. 17 and concluded that Fogle suffers from hypersexuality, mild pedophilia, and alcohol abuse and dependency.

He said he took Fogle's sexual history, including his sexual interests and tested him to determine what images caused Fogle to be sexually aroused. He said Fogle also told him that he had "a fairly extensive history" of using prostitutes for sex. Under cross-examination, Bradford said Fogle admitted to paying a minimum of about $12,000 a year for sex.

Bradford said Fogle told him he had engaged in sex with minors of 16 and 17 years of age, referring to two teenage prostitutes Fogle had admitted paying for sex, and said that he had a sexual interest in teenagers.

> **I so regret that I let so many of you down.** I want to redeem my life. I want to become a good, decent person. I want to rebuild my life.
>
> Jared Fogle

"He started viewing pornography in college and had a fairly extensive collection of pornography in college," Bradford said.

Bradford said Fogle apparently had a compulsive eating disorder before he lost all of the weight that led to him becoming the face of Subway, and that his hypersexuality seemed to develop shortly after he shed the extra pounds.

He also said Fogle, whose wife filed for divorce on the day he agreed to plead guilty, admitted that he occasionally fantasized about children. "His main interest was in young females and some interest in adolescent males."

Bradford said he concluded that Fogle suffered from "mild pedophilia."

Fogle agreed to pay a total of $1.4 million to his 14 victims, with each getting $100,000. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. BORDER

Migrants return to Mexico

There are many reasons for the historic reversal of migration between the U.S. and Mexico, according the Pew Research Center, which announced Thursday that more than 1 million Mexicans headed south to re-establish their lives in the last five years, while only 870,000 migrated north to the U.S.

Some have grown tired of living in the shadow of the law, and say border jumping has become too dangerous. Jobs are easier to find now in Mexico, and family ties are powerful.

Feliciano Bermejo spent 21 years north of the border, raising three sons who are U.S. citizens, before he was stopped in Atlanta for driving with a suspended licence. He was reported to immigration authorities, and agreed to return to Mexico voluntarily, leaving his family behind, so his record would not be marred with a deportation.

The 49-year-old said he won't try to sneak into the U.S. The border has become too dangerous since he last crossed in 1994, and so he is building a life in Mexico.

When Rodrigo Quiroz got word his 79-year-old mother was dying, he hopped on a bus in Phoenix and rushed back to Mexico. He talked to her by phone on his way, but she died before he was able to catch another bus to his hometown of Culiacan.

"I never got to see her alive again," he said.

At first, the 43-year-old planned to continue his life in Arizona, but realized he no longer had it in him to chase dollars.

"My mother's death really made me think," he said. "I want to be near my family. I don't want to go back to the United States anymore. There's work here too."

Lost in the Arizona desert, Saul Solis ate the fruit of the prickly pear and cut open other cactus to stay alive.

On the ninth day, the 40-year-old could not stand. It took all his strength to wave a mirror he had, sending up a glint of light with the hope it would be spotted. He heard a helicopter circling before he passed out.

When he woke, he had an oxygen mask on and was surrounded by Border Patrol agents. He spent two days in the hospital before he was sent across the border to Mexicali.

"I felt like God gave me a second chance, so now that I'm back, I want to live here," he said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED STATES

High winds cause three deaths, power outages across Northwest

Over 100,000 customers were without power in Washington state Thursday after a powerful storm killed three people and prompted an emergency declaration from the governor.

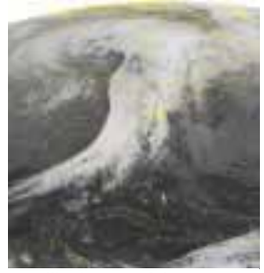
Gov. Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency Wednesday for all Washington counties, clearing the way for state officials to increase aid to those with storm damage.

Winds on Tuesday exceeded 160 km/h in some areas of the Inland Northwest.

In Portland, Ore., an 80-year-old woman spent the night trapped in bed after a tree fell on her home and missed her by inches during the wind storm.

Wind gusts of 160 km/h rattled areas west and north of Denver, blowing snow and knocking out power.

The storm dumped over a foot of snow in some parts of the Plains and winds created snow drifts several feet high. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Satellite image of the storm. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROMANIA

Inspection uncovers multiple fire hazards

Romanian firefighting authorities have uncovered thousands of fire safety violations in a range of buildings following a nightclub blaze last month in which at least 57 people died.

In a statement Thursday, the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations said it had checked 1,000 bars, nightclubs, discotheques, cinemas and malls from Nov. 9 to Nov. 16.

Many public places lacked firefighting equipment, fire permits or did not hold fire drills, the Inspectorate said. It also saw widespread violations of bans on using open flames, pyrotechnics and smoking in public places.

The inspectorate said it found 3,200 violations, of which 430 were fixed during checks.

It said 37 "grave violations" had led to the closure or temporary shutdown of public places and it has handed out fines of 8.6 million lei ($2.07 million). THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Haitians cynical about election

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Suspicious of results from first round of voting at polls

Presidential candidate Moise Jean Charles rides horseback with a man dressed as Haitian independence hero Jean Jacques Dessalinese. DIEU NALIO CHERY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A poll by an independent research group has found deep public suspicion of the first round of the presidential election in Haiti, a finding that is likely to fuel calls by opposition parties for a recount of the disputed results.

Teams of researchers with the Brazil-based Igarape Institute conducted exit polls on the day of the Oct. 25 election and followed up with the same voters again after preliminary results were announced on Nov. 5. They found that public confidence in the process had plummeted between the two dates, according to an analysis they planned to release Thursday.

In the election exit poll, 82 per cent of voters agreed with the statement "As far as I can see, this election is fair, there is no fraud."

> **There needs to be some neutral investigation or intervention in the process to restore people's confidence that their vote will count.** Athena Kolbe, co-author Igarape report

But in the follow up, the conclusion was almost the opposite with nearly 90 per cent saying they disagreed with the statement.

The poll also came up with a curious result when voters were asked who they voted for among the 54 names on the ballot. Just over 6 per cent said they voted for government-backed candidate Jovenel Moise, placing him fourth. But preliminary results announced Nov. 5 said he came in first with nearly 33 per cent of the vote, putting him in a runoff with second-place finisher Jude Celestin.

The runoff is scheduled for Dec. 27. It is expected to feature Moise, a businessman who has never held political office and was picked as a successor by President Michel Martelly, against Celestin, a former head of the state-owned construction company who was defeated in the disputed presidential election in 2010.

Opposition supporters have staged repeated protests over the results since Nov. 5 as they demand a recount.

Several thousand marched in the capital Wednesday until they were dispersed by police firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

Martelly's party has denied opposition accusations that it manipulated the voting or the ballot count and has dismissed calls for a recount.

The Igarape exit poll found about 4 per cent of voters witnessed what they considered fraud, which included officials improperly turning away voters, people voting multiple times or casting ballots as a proxy for other voters.

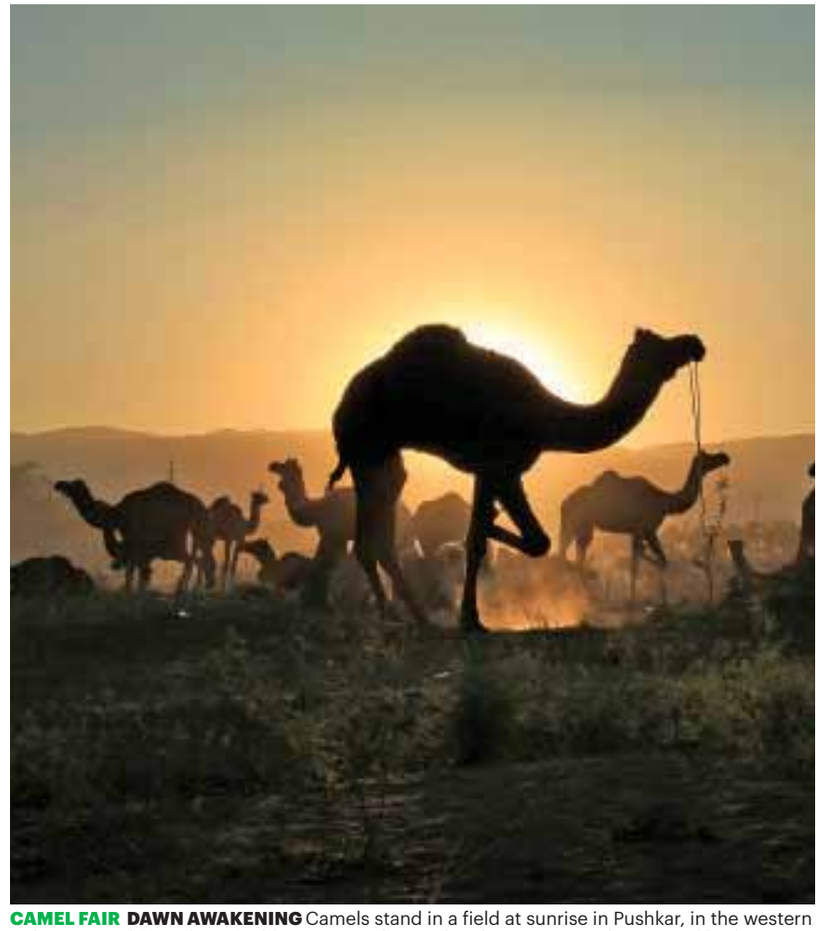
Incidents of fraud were witnessed by research team members at 12 polling stations. The U.S., Canadian and Haitian researchers interviewed 1,991 people at 135 polling stations. The survey had a margin of error of 2.29 percentage points.

Igarape has conducted social science polling in Haiti for more than a decade.

Athena Kolbe, a professor at the State University of New York at Brockport who is one of the authors of the report, said the exit polling was part of a long-term project and they did not originally plan to release it before the Dec. 27 runoff. But that changed after they saw the results, which suggest people are losing faith in the electoral process..

"There needs to be some neutral investigation or intervention in the process to restore people's confidence that their vote will count," Kolbe said by phone from Port-au-Prince. "Otherwise people just won't return to the polls."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



CAMEL FAIR DAWN AWAKENING Camels stand in a field at sunrise in Pushkar, in the western Indian state of Rajasthan. Pushkar is a popular Hindu pilgrimage spot frequented by foreign tourists who come to the town for its annual cattle fair. DEEPAK SHARMA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PAKISTAN

Death sentences must proceed: Prime Minister

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has asked the country's president to reject a petition for pardon for four suspected militants sentenced to death over the Peshawar school attack last December that killed 150 people, mostly children. The horrific Dec. 16 attack was claimed by the Taliban and prompted Pakistan to lift a 2008 moratorium on the death penalty.

The government released a statement on Thursday quoting Sharif as saying that the "brutal and merciless killings" of the children in Peshawar have convinced him that the perpetrators of such crimes don't deserve any mercy.

Under the constitution, Pakistan's president has the authority to pardon any convicted person.

Since the moratorium was lifted, Pakistan has hanged nearly 300 on death row, most of them convicted criminals — not the Taliban or other insurgents.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEPAL

Protests disrupt health care

Shortages of life-saving medicine because of political protests in Nepal that have blocked key roads could lead to a crisis, doctors said Thursday.

Hospitals are rescheduling surgeries by weeks, and patients are finding it difficult to get to medical facilities due to fuel shortages, said Dr. Mukti Ram Shrestha of the Nepal Medical Association.

"If the situation of shortages continues, patients could start dying after two weeks," Shrestha said.

Truckloads of medicine have been blocked at the main border crossing with India for the last few months by Nepal's Madhesi ethnic protesters, he said, adding that Indian authorities were also not allowing the shipments across even at points where there are no protests.

The traditionally marginalized Madhesis have been protesting Nepal's new constitution, demanding to be given greater autonomy over local matters.

India, which has close cultural ties with the group, has restricted fuel and other goods to Nepal. Nepal imports about 60 per cent of its medicine from India.

Most of the fuel comes from India, and the restriction has led to severe shortages in Nepal.

Besides the emergency medicines, patients with long-term illnesses including high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney and heart diseases, were also having difficulty finding medicine.

"We are running out of medicine in our store, and if this continues, we will surely face a crisis," said Yuvraj K.C., who runs a pharmacy in Kathmandu.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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NOW THAT'S SOME BLING **SECOND-LARGEST DIAMOND FOUND** Vancouver-based mining company Lucara Diamond Corp. says it has unearthed the second-largest gem quality diamond ever, and the largest discovered in over a century, at its Karowe Mine in Botswana. The 1,111-carat diamond, pictured above, measures 65 millimetres by 56 mm by 40 mm — a rock weighing half a pound that's a little smaller than a tennis ball. Only the Cullinan diamond, weighing 3,106 carats — close to 1½ pounds — and measuring over 10 centimetres in length, beats the diamond found by Lucara. COURTESY LUCARA DIAMOND CORP/THE CANADIAN PRESS

118 years to close pay gap: Report

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Study ranked Canada 30th out of 145 nations

Women around the world will earn less than men for the next 118 years if present trends in pay inequity persist, the World Economic Forum predicts.

The global pay gap between men and women closed by a mere 3 per cent over the past decade, noticeably stalling after 2009/2010, says the forum's annual Global Gender Gap report.

The slow progress means women are only now earning what men earned nearly a decade ago, $11,000 on average, the first year the Geneva-based non-profit foundation began tracking the data. Meanwhile, men's average pay has nearly doubled to $21,000 worldwide.

As the global economy becomes increasingly automated, "we need to create a world where women's contributions and ideals are as valued as those of men," said Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the forum, best known for its annual meeting of global leaders in Davos, Switzerland.

The report, which also looks at women's progress in education, health and political empowerment, found Canada ranked 30th out of the 145 nations surveyed.

Around the world, the Nordic nations remain the most gender-equal societies, led by Iceland, Norway and Finland, ranking first, second and third, the World Economic Forum said. The least equitable are Syria, Pakistan and Yemen, ranking 143rd, 144th and 145th respectively, the forum's report found.

One seemingly counter-intuitive ranking went to the African nation of Rwanda, which came in 6th. Much of it is due to the Rwanda genocide of 1994, which devastated the male population, leaving women to run the country.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE, WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

ON BOARD

Largest one-year jump in female representation

Women hold 19.5 per cent of the seats on the boards of Canada's biggest companies, up from 17.1 per cent in 2014, says the Canadian Board Diversity Council. It's the largest one-year increase in female representation on the boards of FP500 companies since 2001. The rise follows introduction of a new "comply or explain" policy that forces publicly traded companies to disclose statistics on women on their boards. THE CANADIAN PRESS

FOREIGN POLICY

Trudeau makes his mark

Canada's new prime minister departed Thursday from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Manila, closing his first act on the international stage — trailed by a squealing mob of young Filipino journalists and volunteers and questions about whether any of it might be good for his broader foreign policy goals.

One of the things Justin Trudeau talked about a lot at this summit was the need to put Canada on the front lines of the fight against climate change.

Earlier in the day, that won him plaudits from U.S. President Barack Obama.

But Obama put the squeeze on Trudeau. The president said that the U.S. and Canada are "both soon to be signatories" to the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Trudeau has said he wants to consult with Canadians and Parliament before moving forward on the Pacific Rim trade pact. But Obama told this summit he wants countries to move swiftly towards ratification.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Justin Trudeau addresses a news conference in Manila, Thursday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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NATURAL GAS: $2.276 US (-7.1¢)
DOW JONES: 17,732.75 (-4.41)

ROOIBOS HARVEST

Drought in Africa hits red lattes, teas

From frothy red lattes to rust-coloured teas, popular rooibos drinks will likely become scarcer and more expensive because of a widespread drought in South Africa, including in scrubland where the rooibos plant normally flourishes.

A devastated rooibos harvest may lead to a 90 per cent price increase, a trade council said on Thursday. The U.S. is one of the biggest importers of rooibos tea. There was little rainfall during the July and August planting months which could cause the worst harvest in years, the South African Rooibos Council said in a statement.

Farmers will only know the extent of their losses in the first half of 2016 when the volume of the final harvest is known, said council spokesman Ernest du Toit.

South Africa is the only region where the rooibos plant grows naturally.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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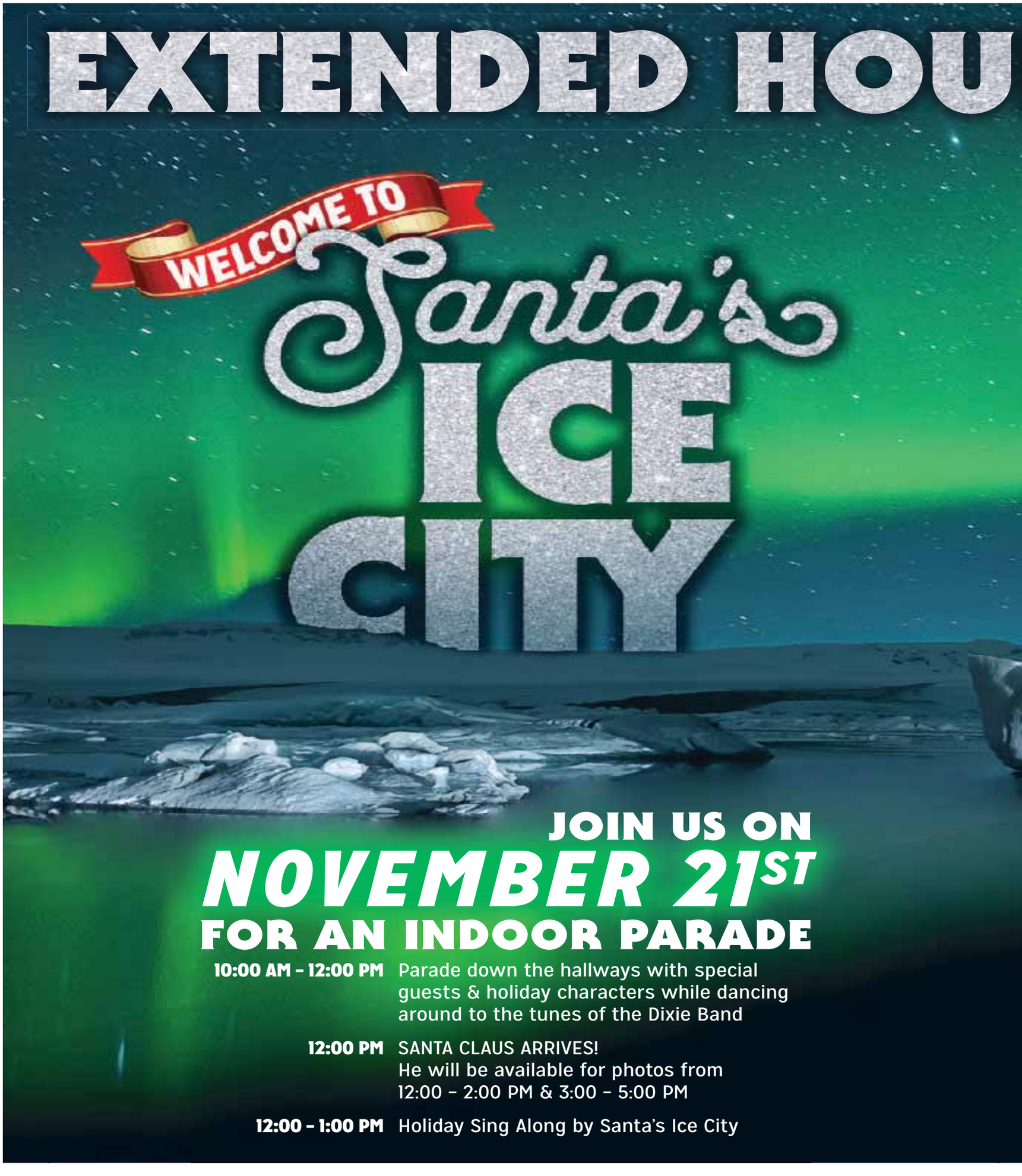

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3:00 – 5:00 PM
6:00 – 8:00 PM
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12:00 – 2:00 PM
3:00 – 5:00 PM

DECEMBER 24
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Weekend, November 20-22, 2015

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

You can't help but want a towering figure in feminism like Gloria Steinem to have the best chat of her life, chatting with you. But damn, are you lucky that she's chatting to you at all.

I think I screwed up with Gloria Steinem. She was great. She was (is) interesting, and thoughtful and kind. Also: At ease.

But I was trying far too hard. Maybe it was over-reading all things by and for her, or marking her new book My Life on the Road, using "sign here" stickies at my favourite parts, as if I'd have time to touch on them all, worrying how to ask questions she'd never heard before.

Of course, Steinem doesn't need any interviewer to be interesting.

I began by thanking her for her decades of activism.

"Well, you know, I feel the same thankfulness to all the people who woke me up," she said. "It's like a chain, and it just goes on and on, which is the good news."

Many of the people who "woke her up" are detailed in her memoir, a personal history of second-wave feminism from the vanguard, a meditation on the act of listening, a book rich with characters she meets on the road, in planes, taxis and trains, in India, the U.S. and Canada. They teach her and buoy her and offer her hope, and I asked if we all need to travel to get that feeling of optimism.

But she said the road can be a state of mind: "When you leave your house in the morning, just being open to accident makes a big difference. Take those moments in the elevator, when nobody's talking but everybody's thinking the same thing, or whatever the immediate spontaneous moment is, and going with it to see what happens."

GLORIA'S GLAMOUR It's impossible not to get star-struck around feminist leader Gloria Steinem, writes Rosemary Westwood of their wide-ranging conversation. GETTY IMAGES

You might, like Steinem, discover your garbage man is your best political adviser.

I told her I see schisms among feminists by race, and she pointed to how the media and some scholars put the social-justice movement into silos, when "What's missing is the understanding of organic connections. It's not possible in any practical way, much less idealistic way, to be a feminist without being anti-racist," she said. Women suffer from both categories, and "in an even deeper way you can't perpetuate race or caste, as in India, or class, without controlling reproduction."

But are we — young feminists — doing enough to listen to each other, and be broad-minded?

No one's all that great at it, she said with a little laugh.

"I think young women are by and large better at it than older ones, because they're more conscious of the connections, because they've grown up with more connections."

"Racism is a prison for white folks who are culturally deprived," she added. "You have to get mad on your own behalf: 'How dare this society tell me who my friends are and where I live?' I think you become a more trustworthy ally when you see your own enlightened self-interest in it."

What most concerns her right now, she said, is global violence against women: Infanticides that led to a planet with more men than women, underage pregnancy causing teenage death, sexualized violence and domestic violence.

And she argued that the issue of violence against women should play a central role in foreign policy, too.

If western governments want to separate moderate groups from extremists to find allies in Syria, "the most reliable way of deciding that is attitudes toward women. If we had taken that seriously, we would not have aided the mujahideen, who turned into the Taliban in Afghanistan, for instance."

The only politician advocating that strategy, she said, is Hillary Clinton. Steinem writes in her book that the U.S. wasn't ready to have a woman head of state in 2008 because we, and especially men, "feel regressed to childhood when we see powerful women."

And now?

"I'm not sure." Maybe Clinton's own time as secretary of state has helped, she said, but it will be a "very tough campaign."

At one point, Steinem painted an image of the future that answered my worries that things can't change: "If we raised one generation of children without violence and without shaming and labels and, you know, race, gender roles and so on, we don't know what might be possible."

When I hung up, my mind created an alternate interview: I laughed when she laughed, instead of being too nervous, pleasantness gave way to firecrackers. You can't help but want a towering figure in feminism like Steinem to have the best chat of her life, chatting with you. But damn, are you lucky that she's chatting to you at all.

It's not possible in any practical way, much less idealistic way, to be a feminist without being anti-racist.
Gloria Steinem

THE BIG THING: POLITICS & PERSONAL SPACE

He's the Prime Minister of PDA. But are Justin Trudeau's touchy-feely tendencies a weird habit or a successful strategy?

Trudeau gets up close and personal with the U.S. president, bear-hugs premiers and soundly smooches his wife without apparent hesitation. Not to mention his habit of snuggly selfies with members of the public. But does it work?

Many Canadians enjoy getting hugs, even if they're too shy to give them in public, said University of Victoria psychology professor Robert Gifford, an expert on personal space. "I would hazard a guess that (Trudeau's body language) works with many people, and in general is a good strategy, whether intended as a strategy or not," Gifford said.

The distance we prefer between ourselves and others varies by culture: People in the Middle East or Latin America, for example, tend to get a bit cosier than Europeans or Americans.

Etiquette expert Debby Mayne recommends a personal bubble of 120 centimetres between strangers, while one group of psychologists looking at norms of personal space used a benchmark of 64 centimetres for everyday conversation. (Violating this could indicate an autism spectrum disorder or a specific type of brain damage — no sign that applies to Trudeau).

Outside of intimate relationships, a distance of less than 45 centimetres typically makes North Americans nervous, "cross-eyed" and instinctively want to move away, according to the anthropology text The Hidden Dimension.

So, yes, Trudeau's in-your-face style "goes against the classical Canadian behaviour pattern," Gifford said. But that's not necessarily a bad thing: "Maybe we all need to hug a bit more."

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JLaw is living up to the hype

CELEBRITY

Industry seeks next big thing, finds star with staying power

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Jennifer Lawrence in a scene from Joy (left), by director David O. Russell, and Academy Award nominated Winter's Bone (right). HANDOUTS

Sometimes you just know.

In my line of work, hype and celebrity are occupational hazards. Every day my inbox is stuffed with news releases touting the Next! Big! Thing! You get numb to it after a while, but every now and again someone will come along you know is destined for something big.

Jennifer Lawrence wasn't a star the first time I met her but you could tell it would only be a matter of time until she was. It was 2010, years before she would win an Academy Award or be known internationally as Katniss Everdeen. She was a struggling newbie with just a handful of credits, but a great big buzz surrounding her performance in Winter's Bone. Her steely but vulnerable take on an Ozark girl who will do anything to keep her family together was garnering good reviews and the usual phrases like "breakout performance" were being thrown around, but this time it felt different. Real.

I was asked to host a question-and-answer period with her after a screening of the film at a theatre in Toronto, but first we planned a quick dinner with a publicist at a nearby hotel. I've eaten with a lot actors who order a piece of steamed fish, no butter, no oil and then, rather than actually put it in their mouth, simply move it around the plate until the waiter takes it away.

Not Jennifer Lawrence. She ordered a steak dinner with sides and ate it all while showing us a cell phone snap of her costume for the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo audition. As she chatted, laughed and enjoyed dinner, it was apparent what she wasn't. She wasn't precious or overwhelmed at being on the cusp of something big. She was doing something rare in this business — being herself and enjoying the ride. In other words the woman you now see photobombing Taylor Swift on red carpets or starring in this weekend's The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2 is the real deal, someone completely at ease with herself in a business that doesn't usually allow for that.

Later, on the way to the theatre, she opted not to take the provided limo. Instead we walked down Bloor Street. It was on the chilly side, so she draped my suit jacket over her shoulders. Along the way her high heel caught in a crack in the pavement and snapped off. Rather than hobble down the street, she kicked off both shoes and walked barefoot the rest of the way, her broken designer shoes in hand.

At the theatre I don't remember what we talked about on stage. When I think back on the night I reflect on the sweet spot she was in, career-wise. She was about to become one of the youngest Oscar nominees ever for best actress in a leading role and yet there wasn't an ounce of pretension about her. Charisma? Yes. Talent? In spades.

I don't claim to have some sort of celebrity ESP, but that night I knew in my gut I had met a star, a feeling reaffirmed when I saw her carry the Hunger Games movies on her back and become a leading voice in the fight for pay equality for women in Hollywood.

Want to see a superstar? Watch the last scene of the Joy trailer. Shot on an iPhone as test footage it's a close-up of Lawrence's face as she fires off two shotgun rounds. "My name's Joy, by the way," she says. It's a simple image but a magnetic one. It's a movie star moment from the rare actor who commands our attention every time she's on screen. Sometimes you just know.

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2	★★★★
Brooklyn	★★★★
The Night Before	★★★★
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THE TV DINNER JESSICA ALLEN

To spoon or not to spoon? Those born in Italy were adamant that it's frowned upon.

I was confused after I watched Brooklyn during TIFF. It wasn't the plot — a young Irish woman, Ellis (Saoirse Ronan), must not only choose between her homeland (Ireland) and the country to which she recently immigrated (America) but also between two young men who inhabit those disparate worlds separated by the Atlantic. I think it was purely a case of disbelief: Did I just sit through an entire contemporary film without spotting a single superhero? Without any overt violence, villains, sex and scandal? Was this simply a tender movie, rich with '50s period detail, about the isolation of the immigrant experience; about love, loss and growing up?

Yes, it was. And I expected the critics would hate the film, which hits theatres Friday, for being overly sentimental. But they are nearly unanimously enchanted. It's a "gorgeous movie about love and the idea that you can't go home," said Indiewire, who also suggests that Ronan is "a sure bet for a best actress nomination."

With a single glance, the 21-year-old actress can so convincingly convey what homesickness looks and feels like that I ached to call my parents. I also became so invested in the difficult decisions her character has to make that my heart raced as though I was watching a thriller.

There was one decision, however, that I questioned. Ellis' den mother, played by the illimitable Julie Walters, helps her practise eating spaghetti, a delicacy that's she's never tried, to prepare Ellis for dinner with the family of her Italian-American boyfriend, Tony.

THE MOVIE: Brooklyn

THE MEAL: Spaghetti and meatballs

Ellis knocks their socks off, as she deftly uses her spoon to twirl the noodles around her forks' tines — just like they do.

Now, there will be two responses to the above observation: Some of you won't bat an eyelash while others will be incredulous: no respecting Italian past the age of five uses a spoon to eat spaghetti.

To spoon or not to spoon? That is the question I posed to friends. Those born in Italy were adamant that it's frowned upon. Plus, they said, you will never be given a spoon for a pasta course at a restaurant in their motherland. Others — including mangiacakes, like me, and second or third generation Italian-Canadians — spoon away. One friend told me that her parents, second generation Italians, used the spoons for noodle-twirling — that is until they travelled back to their tiny home village in Calabria, where spoons were for soup, not spaghetti.

Could it be that when Italians immigrated to North America, not only their food metamorphosed, gracing us with dishes like pepperoni pizza, penne alla vodka and chicken parmigiana, but also their table etiquette did, too?

After getting lost in culinary history — the invention, popularization and industrialization of pasta — I can't be certain. But Miss Manners has a strong opinion on the matter: "In the civilized world, which includes the United States and Italy," she wrote in 2005, "it is incorrect to eat spaghetti with a spoon."

No matter, because all my research made me hungry for what could arguably be Italian Americans' greatest contribution to modern civilization: spaghetti and meatballs. (In Italy, meatballs, or polpette, are served on their own, not in "Sunday gravy.") So, after whipping some up, we devoured huge bowls of it while watching The Godfather II, obviously. No spoons were required.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

BROOKLYN

Saoirse Ronan steps into role she's lived

Hollywood has never been an easy place to carve out a career — especially for child actors growing up in front of the camera. So it's particularly remarkable how smoothly Saoirse Ronan has maneuvered the maelstrom of the movie biz since entering it at just nine years old.

"I never played kid roles and I had never been in kid films so I always just thought of myself as an actor," reasoned the now 21-year-old actress whose acclaimed oeuvre includes The Lovely Bones and The Grand Budapest Hotel. "But until now, it was tricky to showcase that you were ready to move on to that next step of taking on roles that were a little bit more mature and where you're more at, personally."

That's why her latest offering, Brooklyn, was such an important role for the Irish-American actor. Based on Colm Tóibín's award-winning bestseller (which U.K. newspaper The Guardian named as "one of the ten best historical novels"), the 1950s-set drama follows the story of an Irish immigrant who flees to New York in search of work and must struggle with new loves and a life on her own as a young adult.

"What's particularly fresh about this story is that it's told from a woman's point of view and that's something that's missing from all of the accounts in the Irish canon of immigration," explained director John Crowley. "If you got that specific story right, then you'd have the scale to carry hundreds, thousands and millions of stories with it. It's sort of a keyhole drama in that way."

"What's particularly fresh about this story is that it's told from a woman's point of view ... something that's missing from all of the accounts in the Irish canon of immigration.
Director John Crowley

Saoirse Ronan plays an Irish immigrant in 1950s New York in Brooklyn, adapted from Colm Tóibín's bestselling novel. CONTRIBUTED

While that period of history remains scarce on testimony, Ronan insists she didn't necessarily rely on research to assume the character. Instead the acting approach that garnered Ronan an Oscar nomination in 2008 for Atonement has "very much stayed based on instinct" — something that also informed her latest coming-of-age portrayal.

"As you get older and you have more life experience, that does come into play when you play a character," admitted Ronan. "This was less of a journey to step into that place because I was already there."

STEVE GOW/FOR METRO

THREE THINGS

Ronan as chameleon
The first time I interviewed Saoirse Ronan she was 15 years old and the veteran of six movies. I had always admired her performances and as I walked into the interview suite I congratulated her on the film.

"T'anks pure much," she said with an Irish lilt that could charm the label off a bottle of Jameson Whiskey.

It was the first time I had heard her natural accent and confirmed what I already knew: that she was a chameleon with a propensity for accents that could give Meryl Streep a run for her money.

In what part of Ireland was she born? Despite her Irish accent, she was actually born in the Bronx in 1994.

"(My parents) went to New York in the '80s. There was a really bad recession in Ireland at the time. A lot of young people went to New York because that's our trek, that's our journey. The Irish always go to New York or somewhere on the East Coast."

Monica Ronan and Paul Ronan lived in New York for 11 years in total, moving back to County Carlow, Ireland when Saoirse was three years old.

Can she beat me up? Probably. To play teenage assassin Hanna she studied knife fighting, stick fighting, martial arts and learned how to shoot a gun. She performed most of her own stunts in the film and says if she was ever offered the action-star role of James Bond she would happily accept. "That tux? I could totally rock it." RICHARD CROUSE/METRO

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Now playing

DRAMA/ACTION

The Hunger Games - Mockingjay 2

Director: Francis Lawrence
Starring: Jennifer Lawrence, Julianne Moore

With the nation of Panem in a full-scale war, Katniss confronts President Snow in the final showdown. Teamed with a group of other fighters, Katniss goes off on a mission to liberate the citizens of Panem.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 72% Audience: 99%

MYSTERY/SUSPENSE

Secret in their Eyes

Director: Billy Ray
Starring: Chiwetel Ejiofor, Julia Roberts

A tight-knit team of rising FBI investigators — Ray and Jess, along with their District Attorney supervisor Claire — is suddenly torn apart when they discover that Jess's teenage daughter has been brutally and inexplicably murdered.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 35% Audience: 62%

COMEDY

The Night Before

Director: Jonathan Levine
Starring: Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Seth Rogen

Ethan, Isaac, and Chris are friends. Their yearly Christmas Eve reunion has been an annual night of debauchery. But the tradition is coming to an end, and to make it memorable, they set out to find the Nutcracka Ball.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 66% Audience: 96%

DRAMA

Spotlight

Director: Tom McCarthy
Starring: Mark Ruffalo, Michael Keaton

This film tells the riveting true story of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Boston Globe investigation that would rock the city and cause a crisis in one of the world's oldest and most trusted institutions. This tense thriller traces the steps to one of the biggest cover-ups in modern times.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 96% Audience: 95%

COMEDY

Love The Coopers

Director: Jesse Nelson
Starring: Olivia Wilde, Amanda Seyfried

When four generations of the Cooper family come together for their annual Christmas Eve celebration, a series of unexpected visitors and unlikely events turn the night upside down, leading them all towards a surprising rediscovery of family bonds.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 20% Audience: 44%

DRAMA/ROMANCE

By The Sea

Director: Angelina Jolie
Starring: Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt

A married couple takes a vacation in France in the 1970s and finds that their time in a sleepy seaside town, complete with a unique array of locals, strengthens their bond and reaffirms their marriage.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 30% Audience: 61%

THE HUFFINGTON POST Erin Whitney
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DOCUMENTARY

Ex-NHL player still battles demons of sexual abuse

Liz Brown
Metro | Canada

It's been almost 20 years since former NHL player Sheldon Kennedy came forward with his story of sexual abuse at the hands of former Swift Current Broncos head coach Graham James.

In the years that followed, more victims shared their stories, James was jailed and Kennedy held up as a hero as he rollerbladed across Canada to raise money and awareness for sexual abuse victims.

Kennedy thought his disclosure would bring him peace, but the pain and trauma from those early years still haunted him as he battled alcoholism and cocaine addiction and had stints in jail.

At one point he found himself sitting with a gun, contemplating suicide.

Swift Current blends the stories of former NHL player Sheldon Kennedy and younger victims who came forward after one of Kennedy's public talks. It airs Saturday on Global at 9 p.m. ET/PT.
HANDOUT

"I think one of the biggest myths out there is once you tell your story, it's over," says Kennedy.

Swift Current, a new documentary about Kennedy and the struggles of sex abuse victims, aims to dispel that myth.

"This film paints a very visceral and cinematic portrait of how difficult it is to recover from sexual abuse trauma," says the doc's director Joshua Rofé. At first, Rofé says that Kennedy was reticent to work with him on the film, as he felt his story had already been told and there was nothing more to say.

But as their focus sharpened, they realized the story wasn't just Kennedy's, but a broader look at the healing journey.

> **This film paints a very visceral and cinematic portrait of how difficult it is to recover from sexual abuse trauma.**
> Director Joshua Rofé

"I think that this doc is told in a way of how the issues have evolved," says Kennedy, comparing The Sheldon Kennedy Story — the documentary about his life made in the late '90s — to Swift Current.

"If we look at the film that was made 17 years ago, it was just telling a story that showed this stuff happens, but I think we're at a point now where I believe (Swift Current) talks about solution. It's about hope," he says.

Threaded through Kennedy's own recovery are the stories of two 21-year-old victims who spoke up at one of Kennedy's public talks at Durham College in Oshawa, Ont.

In front of 300 people, they told their own stories of abuse and asked Kennedy for help.

"These kids were dying to speak up," says Rofé, who felt compelled to include them in the documentary.

Rofé shows Kennedy sharing his story and helping these young victims deal with the aftermath of their abuse.

"The great comparison that Josh has made in this film is between them — they're 21 — and me, who's been grinding away trying to get healthy for 20 years; the two different places of recovery," says Kennedy.

Today, Kennedy is clean and works to advocate for better child protection policies in Canada and the U.S. and is the lead director at the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary.

But he admits his recovery still requires day-to-day work.

"It's about having tools," he says.

"For me, that's attending meetings and advocacy, working out, and heading out to my farm to ground myself."

"What I'm good at is pushing for change and listening to the grassroots and pushing at the top to make things happen," he says.

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"Absolutely everything is looked over, sorted, scanned and checked for recalls," says Christina. "Anything we're not sure of, we don't buy."

The idea is simple — bring in a bag or a bin of your child's outgrown toys and clothing. Items are sorted by professionals and the ones in sellable condition are scanned into a computer. The computer generates an offer, and you can choose to accept it or not, in cash or store credit.

There's no haggling, no guesswork, and no appointment is necessary, says Christina.

"Customers love it. It's so convenient, much more so than organizing a yard sale or trying to sell piecemeal online."

Christina and Dave Dunlop at the grand opening of their new store, Once Upon a Child.
CONTRIBUTED

Once Upon a Child celebrated their grand opening in August and are ready for you to check it out. Find them on the corner of Ellice and Empress, Monday to Saturday, from 9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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INTERVIEW

Jonathan Levine talks The Night Before

Matt Prigge
Metro | New York

Seth Rogen and Anthony Mackie feel too old for getting sloppy on Christmas Eve anymore, but Joseph Gordon-Levitt is still game in The Night Before. HANDOUT

The last time director Jonathan Levine made a movie with Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Seth Rogen, it was 50/50, a dramedy about cancer.

The Night Before is more lighthearted — sort of. It follows three friends (the other played by Anthony Mackie) doing their annual tradition of having a sloppy night in NYC on Christmas Eve. But this time the characters played by Rogen and Mackie feel they're too old and settled down to ever do it again, leaving Gordon-Levitt as the last hold-out. It's that anxiety that made Levine — who also made The Wackness and Warm Bodies — comfortable doing his first full-on comedy.

This is your second film with Seth Rogen, after 50/50. How did you two first meet?
On 50/50, there was another filmmaker who dropped out a couple months before. I was one of five people up for the gig. For whatever reason they liked me. I think it was because I made The Wackness and they thought I would smoke weed with them. (Laughs) But it was also because I spoke relatively intelligently about the material.

I've read you two have helped each other out on projects — that he helped look at Warm Bodies and you looked at This is the End.
Yeah, but it wasn't in any specific way. Seth and Evan continuously have people come in and look at their stuff. If I'm looking at This is the End, I'm one of 50 people who are looking at it. On Warm Bodies I definitely used that. The first time was on 50/50, where we thought we needed to have smart people look at it and tell us what's good and what's bad. Seth was one of those people. It's a culture of rigorous note-giving and improving the work.

You've done dramas or romances that were funny before, but you've never really made a full-on comedy.
It was a change of pace. And it certainly wouldn't have worked for me if at its heart there wasn't an undercurrent of drama. Having it fundamentally revolve around issues of friendship and getting older, that me more comfortable executing the comedy. I loved doing something whose primary goal was to make people laugh. You feel like you're throwing a party and your only goal is to make everyone has as much fun as possible.

Your sets sound very loose.

You're not like Sam Peckinpah, drunkenly screaming at people.
No one screams at anybody. Well, I probably screamed on occasion. But generally everyone can bring their friend, everyone can brings their mom, everyone's welcome. When there's a very serious scene, of course it's not like that. It's very subdued. But if you were to see it, it would look like we're having fun.

Despite all the crazy things that happen in the film, it is rooted in a serious concern. Joseph Gordon-Levitt's Ethan hasn't gotten his stuff together, while his closest friends have, causing a disconnect.
When we were writing it, every single person had someone in mind who was that person in their life. We talked about why that person was not succeeding. There were many reasons. For a lot of us, the reason we've succeeded is talent, but also a lot of luck, so it's s—y to look at the friend who hasn't been so lucky. But the truth is a lot of it is luck. We settled on giving (Ethan) a trauma he's never been able to move past. That happens to a lot of people, whether it's someone who got stuck in a job for too long and looked up one day and his friends were more successful than him or her, or someone just got knocked down and took too long getting back up.

How conscious were you of playing with holiday movie conventions?
I imagined it as a Christmas movie for people who didn't celebrate traditional Christmases, whether because you're Jewish or from another non-Christian religion or your parents are divorced or you hate your parents. There are lot of people who feel left out of the traditional Christmas. I would go out in New York do stuff like this on Christmas Eve. There were a lot of Christian people, there were a lot of Jews. It was all people who had a reason for not celebrating the traditional Christmas. It's nice because Christmas is an oppressive, monolithic thing.

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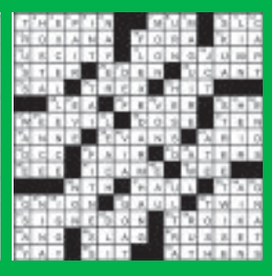
7	6	3	1	5	9	2	8	4
1	2	5	3	4	8	6	9	7
5	3	6	8	9	4	7	1	2
2	9	1	5	7	3	8	4	6
8	7	4	6	1	2	3	5	9
6	1	8	9	2	5	4	7	3
9	5	7	4	3	6	1	2	8
3	4	2	7	8	1	9	6	5



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Sarah Silverman's New York

DAY IN THE LIFE

Comedian talks her favourite hangouts and pastimes

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

Sarah Silverman may have grown up in New Hampshire, but the popular comedian certainly relates more to New York — in particular Lower Manhattan, where she blossomed as an edgy standup comic. While her upcoming, critically acclaimed drama I Smile Back and a new HBO comedy special (premiering Nov. 23) have kept her busy lately, Silverman always gets back to the city that makes her "heart just swell." We caught up to uncover her ideal day in The Big Apple.

Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village is the ideal spot for people-watching. ISTOCK

The Comedy Cellar is like my home, I love it.

Brunch at the deli

Begin your day with a late-morning brunch at B&H Dairy (facebook.com/BHDairyKosherRestaurant) — an East Village staple for more than seven decades.

"It's a tiny hole-in-the-wall," laughs Silverman, of her go-to daytime diner. "They have the best soup, the best challah bread and it's a kosher deli. I have no religion at all, but I am a vegetarian so it's the only matzo ball soup I can eat because it's not made with chicken fat."

Walk in the park

"My favourite thing to do in the world is just walking the streets of New York," admits Silverman. But nowhere is patrolling the pavement better-suited than nearby Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village (washingtonsquareparkconservancy.org).

Notably renowned for the iconic 123-year-old Washington Square Arch, this gorgeous urban garden plays host to everyone from students to street performers to chess enthusiasts, making the historical square once known for public executions now the ideal spot for people-watching.

Dinner with Frank

A mere 12-minute stroll back into the East Village will land you at Silverman's favourite supper stop. A small, uncompromising eatery, Frank (frankrestaurant.com) boasts an astonishing wine list and serves up authentic Italian entrees like Rigatoni al Ragu for a reasonable price.

"It's loud, it's small, you can't have any adjustments on your order (and) it's cash only — it's one of those places," says Silverman. "But it is the best Italian food in New York City."

Laugh the night away

Make your way back to Greenwich Village to finish your evening rolling in the cramped aisles of Silverman's favourite comedy club.

"The Comedy Cellar (comedycellar.com) is like my home, I love it," explained Silverman of the legendary basement bar where one can often catch surprise sets by the likes of Chris Rock or Louis CK.

Afterwards, Silverman suggests winding down around the corner at their sister club The Village Underground. After all, "that's where all the comics hang out."

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SCHOOL AGE

The ABCs of finding the right school

SHUTTERSTOCK

Perhaps your child is starting kindergarten. Maybe you've just moved into a new neighbourhood or city. Or perhaps your teen is struggling in their current high school.

Finding the right school for your child at any age isn't always as easy as sending them to the closest neighbourhood school, says April Middaugh, a Manitoba teacher and guidance counsellor.

"Canada has great schools, both public and private, but it's not always that simple," she says. "But you generally have options."

Here's Middaugh's checklist to help parents decide:

1. Know your child. "Consider your child's temperament and learning ability," says Middaugh. "Is she at a learning level she should be? Would she benefit from smaller classes? What are her interests and talents? All these things are important and highly individual to each child."

2. Break out the list. "If you know the type of school your child should attend, make a list of schools that fit your criteria. What's most important to you? A second language? A vocational or academic focus? Extra curricular activities? Transitional programming to help them adjust? Does the school need to be within walking or bus distance? Make a list of what you want then find schools that fit."

3. Visit the schools — and visit more than one. "Most schools have a tour they can take you on," says Middaugh. "For kids starting Kindergarten, there's usually an information night, or for older kids transitioning to junior or high school, there's usually a tour. So go with them. Make sure the kids spend some time there, too, and ask lots of questions."

4. Know there's more than one option. "Don't get your heart set on one particular school if it turns out to be not quite right," advises Middaugh. "We're lucky in that there's almost always other choices."

Violins enhance learning, confidence

St. Charles school has seen the success of unique program

CONTRIBUTED

Visitors to St. Charles Catholic School are often astonished at the rows of violins stacked in the hallways — one per student. Principal Dr. Anne Penny launched the violin program in 2007.

"It has been in place for nine years, and we see the fruits. Students are confident performers, with improved concentration, memory, reading skills and self-discipline," said Dr. Penny.

St. Charles Catholic School, located in west Winnipeg nestled on a quiet street near the riverbank, is proud to offer this unique program.

"I am so excited be the full-time violin teacher," says Rachel Sham. "The students often say this is their favorite class after phys-ed."

Then there is the choral program, led by Kathleen Lalonde: "We develop vocal projection that can be transferred to other areas of learning and overall musicality."

Robyn Powell, Chair of the school's Board of Directors, has had all three of her children in the program.

"It is amazing. These are average kids who develop exceptional talent," she says. "For a family that is more familiar with hockey and ringette, this has been a wonderful experience for us. They have grown to love making music."

To learn more about St. Charles Catholic School, attend the Open House on Nov. 25 at 7 p.m., or a Cantata performance on Nov. 23/24. Please contact the school for more information.

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Faith, service at heart of St. Mary's

'We focus on forming the whole person'

Driving through the grounds and looking at the majestic exterior of St. Mary's Academy (SMA), it's clear that something special happens there.

Within the walls of SMA, young women have been formed in mind, body and spirit since 1902 (dating back to 1869 at a previous location close to the Forks). SMA is a grades 7 to 12 school in the tradition of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, a teaching congregation founded in Quebec by Blessed Marie Rose Durocher.

"At St. Mary's Academy we focus on forming the whole person," says Connie Yunyk, SMA's President. "We are committed to educating young women; to be aware of her gifts, to have a sense of social responsibility and a commitment of service and generosity to others, to develop a love of learning and a desire for excellence and to embrace moral values rooted in the Catholic faith and a conscious spirituality."

SMA's 585 students come from diverse socio-economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 70 per cent are Catholic and the remaining 30 per cent come from a variety of faith backgrounds. Between 15 per cent and 20 per cent receive tuition assistance in the form of a bursary. Students are academically oriented and each year approximately 95 per cent of SMA graduates attend universities and colleges of their choice. Upon graduation, SMA has an active Alumnae Association which fosters and encourages life-long friendships and opportunities for networking.

To learn more about SMA and meet teachers and current students, visit their Open House and Information Evening on Jan. 26. Visit www.stmarysacademy.mb.ca for more information.

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ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

INFORMATION EVENING & OPEN HOUSE

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Ravenscourt built on overall excellence

St. John's Ravenscourt has long been known for nurturing some of the brightest academic minds in Canada. But in recent years, the school has turned that focus on academics into a broader goal of excellence outside the classroom, too.

The K-12 prep and boarding school, nearly 200 years old, says they're mindful of their past while preparing students for a world that changes daily.

"We utilize the best of 21st century learning," says Jim Keefe, headmaster. "It allows our students to thrive in a rapidly changing world. We're preparing them not only to be successful in university but in the working world beyond.

"We're obviously phenomenally proud of our past, but at the same time we recognize the need to prepare our students for the future."

To that end, for the past several years St. John's Ravenscourt has also begun to focus on entrepreneurship and financial awareness along with their core values of academic excellence and community service.

The approach appears to be working.

"We have 100 per cent university placement," says Keefe. "And last year we had more than $800,000 awarded to graduating students in scholarship money.

"Sometimes I'm asked who is a typical student who comes to St. John's Ravenscourt. And the answer is: we don't really have one. We have students who excel in so much more than just the classroom — whether it be sport, music, drama, volunteerism — all these fantastic programs that make a difference not only at the school and in our students' lives, but in our community, as well."

For example, the debate team has won 14 out of the last 28 world debate and public speaking championships — a feat unmatched by any other school in the world.

CONTRIBUTED

St. John's Ravenscourt provides broad support and encouragement for every child who attends.

"We are a close-knit community and we want all our students to excel and succeed at what they love to do," Keefe says.

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Time for holiday party prep

HOST WITH THE MOST

You've decided to hold a party this year: now what?

Astrid Van Den Broek

Every year you've wanted to host a holiday party but every year things have been too crazy. But now that you've settled on hosting one and you have a date picked, where do you go from here?

SENT INVITES OUT

Nancy Zaretsky, founder and head stylist of Toronto's My Perfect Party Inc., recommends getting those invitations out as soon as possible.

Once you've set the date and invites are in the mail, give some thought as to the type of party you'd like. A casual one? A formal affair? Where are you going to host it? In your home or somewhere else?

THINK THEME

Zaretsky says themed parties are the trend these days in pulling together holiday affairs.

"So it's beyond just a colour scheme," she said. "Now people do things like an Ugly Sweater Party or a movie theme or something specific like that. It really makes the party a bit more fun." It also makes party planning easier, since all your foods and decor can be wrapped around this idea.

Themed parties also lure guests to your gathering. "So if they have to wear something specific or do something for the event, it's more of a unique event for attendees and can attract people to your parties," said Zaretsky.

THE DAY OF

Work ahead and have everything prepared so that you, too, as the host, can enjoy the party and aren't spending all your time in the kitchen. "Prepare a light menu beforehand with something easy that you've done before," suggested Zaretsky. "This isn't the time to start a new recipe or use one that's challenging." Prep work also means prep ping for mid-party replacements: think appetizers on platters that are ready to go, plenty of extra ice stashed in a cooler or freezer and bowls of garnishes for drinks and appetizers also standing waiting. Better yet, when you're planning the party, opt for self-serve dishes that require minimal maintenance on your part.

SET UP A TAKEAWAY

End your party with a sweet touch in the form of a sweet or dessert table, popcorn bars or candy stand.

Think self-serve so again you're not waiting at the door handing everything out. You could even give away your leftovers if you arm your guests with unique, small containers to take food home with them. (Hint: Be sure to put a sign up at the station telling guests to feel free to fill the container up and take it home with them.)

"Anything small that's personalized is really nice and people really love that," said Zaretsky.

Think about what type of party you'd like, such as casual, formal or themed. SHUTTERSTOCK

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For young and old, men will enjoy feeling spoiled

Tanya Enberg

1 Joe Fresh facial toner, $12 each
2 Old Spice Fresher Collection gift set, $12.99 – $14.99, at Walmart
3 Braun Series 7 shaver $279.99 – $339.99, dependent on the model
4 Brooks Brothers Classic Cologne, $60 at Brooks Brothers stores across Canada or brooksbrothers.com
5 Brooks Brothers Leather Travel Toiletry Case, $298 at Brooks Brothers stores across Canada
6 Quo Men's Manicure Kit, $15 at Shoppers Drug Mart

For men:
From buffed nails and soothing aftershaves to smart leather travel cases for storing such toiletries, these timeless gift suggestions will leave the man in your life feeling spoiled ... and expertly groomed, too.

Fitting for the classic gentleman, Brooks Brothers Classic Cologne is blended with citrus and jasmine notes plus hints of herbaceous, patchouli and sandalwood. $60 at Brooks Brothers stores across Canada or brooksbrothers.com.

Travel in style with the durable Brooks Brothers Leather Travel Toiletry Case, crafted in Italy and featuring two generous zippered compartments for on-the-go toiletries. $298 at Brooks Brothers stores across Canada.

The secret's out — men want good-looking nails. Thankfully the Quo Men's Manicure Kit makes it easy with all the quick-fix essentials, including nail clippers, tweezers, scissors and a nail file. $15 at Shoppers Drug Mart.

For time-pressed guys, the Braun Series 7 shaver is here, boasting all kinds of cool features. At 10,000 micro-vibrations per minute, it cleans, lubricates and charges at the touch of a button, and a built-in comb finds flat-lying hairs so he'll never miss a spot. $279.99 – $339.99, dependent on the model.

From the makers of Bio-Oil comes Lipidol, a new line of skin care oils. Guys will love the brand's after-shave oil, soothing and light, it's the perfect solution for fending off dry winter skin, $8.97 at Walmart.

Got a guy with edge? Meet the Essential Rebels Kit, a great-smelling four-piece collection containing Advanced Clear Skin Facial Cleanser, Advanced Clear Skin Facial Scrub, Anti-Wrinkle Moisturizer and Rehab Roller. It comes in a cool screen-printed burlap sack. $58 at rebelsrefinery.com.

For teen boys:
Sure, he may not admit to wanting smooth feet, an invigorating body wash or a high-power face cleanser, but secretly, they're all on the teenage boy's Santa wish list (and he won't even sneer at them).

If variety is the spice of life, the Fragrance Sampler Set for Him hits the mark with 10 trendy fragrances, among them Jimmy Choo Man, Dolce and Gabbana Light Blue and John Varvatos. The kit also comes with a "scent certificate" that can be redeemed for a full-size bottle. $80 at Shoppers Drug Mart.

Here's a lip balm he won't mind carrying around. The Capital Vices Skull Lip Balm by Rebels Refinery does what it needs to do with coconut and almond oils to help soothe and hydrate lips, while packing a cool punch at the same time. $7.99 at rebelsrefinery.com.

Gentle and nourishing, the Joe Fresh cleaners and toner ($12 each) will get skin off to a fresh and healthy start for the new year.

From the old-school brand that keeps getting hipper comes the Old Spice Fresher Collection gift set, inspired by nature with fresh scents including timber, amber or citron. Suggested price $12.99 – $14.99, at Walmart.

Smooth feet for dudes? You bet. Dry, rough skin gets the boot with the Micro Pedi Man.

The device's micro-mineral roller spins 360 degrees, 30 times per second, gently buffing even the toughest of skin from the soles and heels. $49.99 at Shoppers Drug Mart or at micropedi.ca.

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Free items and sale prices in effect until November 26th 2015, or while supplies last.

Best beauty buys for her

1 Philosophy's Shampoo, Shower Gel & Bubble Bath ($21, Sephora)
2 Quo Cosmetics Backstage Brush Set ($70, Shoppers Drug Mart)
3 Flow Instant Intensity ($19.99-$29.99)
4 Joe Fresh nail polish ($6)
5 Eos holiday collection ($9.99, Loblaws and Walmart)
6 Hard Candy Baked Trio ($9.98, Walmart)
7 Micro Nail electric polisher ($59.99, Shoppers Drug Mart)

Tanya Enberg

Women

From the sweetest holiday-inspired bath goodies to the most decadent fragrance of 2015 and the best lotions and potions around, this beauty gift guide roundup will earn you big, big points with the woman in your life this season.

To wrap or not to wrap, that is the question. With the scrumptious scents of Philosophy's Shampoo, Shower Gel & Bubble Bath (Vanilla Bean Nutmeg, Christmas Cookie, Candy Cane and Iced Orchid), the biggest challenge here will be actually gifting them. $21 at Sephora.

For those with a love of luxury, Decadence from Marc Jacobs lives up to its name. Italian plum, golden saffron and iris top notes are joined by Bulgarian rose, jasmine sambac and orris at its heart with base notes of liquid amber, vetiver and papyrus woods. The emerald green bottle pays homage to the designer's handbag aesthetic with a gold chain and sexy python-inspired cap. 50 ml $115; 100 ml $140 at the Hudson's Bay.

Good things come to those who receive the Most Wonderful Things holiday set from Philosophy. The kit is packed with skin-loving essentials from the much-loved brand, including Purity Made Simple cleanser, Microdelivery Peel and activator, Time in a Jar age-defying serum, Time in a Bottle high-potency vitamin C activator and Renewed Hope in a Jar moisturizer. $79 at Hudson's Bay.

The limited edition Eos holiday collection is one sweet trio (vanilla bean, sweet mint and pomegranate raspberry), packed with soothing shea butter and vitamin E. The set also includes glittery art for personalizing each balm. $9.99 at Loblaws and Walmart.

Go on, get her buffing — her nails, that is.

The smart Micro Nail electric polisher brings brilliant shine and smoothness to nails in seconds, rotating through 360 degrees, fending against tough ridges and staining for flawless nails fast. $59.99 at micronail.ca or Shoppers Drug Mart.

Winter hair recovery comes easy with Flow Professional Hair Care products, with nourishing shampoo, conditioner, detangler and the super powerful Instant Intensity 30-second treatment. $19.99-$29.99 at pro salons or flowhaircare.com.

Cosmetic brushes get the royal treatment with the deluxe Quo Cosmetics Backstage Brush Set ($70 at Shoppers Drug Mart). The set includes eight must-have makeup brushes with stunning gold handles.

Teen Girls

Not sure what beauty treasures teenage girls will want to see tucked under the tree this year? These fun and fabulous finds — big and small — are guaranteed to dazzle.

Playful and refined with lily of the valley, jasmine and rose meeting earthy patchouli extract notes, the new Miu Miu fragrance is a lesson in contrasts — youthful, soft, daring and feminine — and it will score you big points this holiday season. 50 ml $100 at Holt Renfrew.

Get the season cracking with the Quo Cosmetics Cracker Set. Each cracker contains a pretty mini lip gloss and eyeshadow. $20 for a set of four at Shoppers Drug Mart.

Sparkle and shine with party-ready nail polish from Joe Fresh ($6) in Gold Crystal.

Give the gift of glowing skin with the Hard Candy So Baked Trio featuring illuminating cream for highlighting cheekbones, a satiny-finish blush and warming, sun-kissed bronzer. $9.98 at Walmart.

Must-have stocking stuffers needn't cost a fortune. The Smokey Eye Palette (just $5 from Joe Fresh) arrives just in time to make a head-turning entrance at all of those sexy New Year's Eve bashes.

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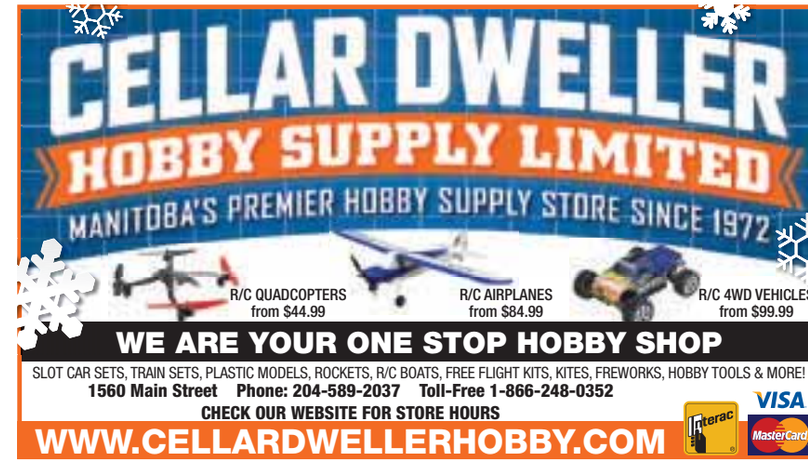
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Toys to change how kids play

Jen Taplin

The gift-giving challenge is on — finding and picking out those just-right presents for our little ones, while ensuring we check off "everything" on their holiday wish lists.

We want to put something under the tree that our kids will go nuts over, while making smart choices, so gifts aren't tossed aside before Boxing Day.

It's a challenge toy companies embrace, putting their best products forward to help parents — and aunts, uncles, grandparents, whoever — wrap up the ideal gifts for kids.

A team from Toys "R" Us Canada spends the year tracking worldwide trends in preparation for its annual holiday hit list, said company spokesman Tamar Nersesian.

"Many of the toys on our holiday hot-toy list are changing the way kids play, using the latest innovations to make toys more interactive, endless, responsive and personalized than they have ever been before," Nersesian said.

Here are some of the toys that made the hot list:

Mega Bloks Despicable Me – Build-A-Minion ($69.99, Toys "R" Us); the Little Live Pets Clever Keet — that sings, dances and drives its own cart ($74.99, Toys "R" Us; Nerf N-Strike Modulus ECS-10 Blaster ($64.86, Walmart); and the LEGO Star Wars Millennium Falcon ($179.86, Walmart).

David Niggli, president of the American catalogue company Chasing Fireflies, said personalized toys are extra special because they can be kept as keepsakes. They have a Design Your Own Princess Dress, plus a line of personalized plush toys.

"I think parents and kids are looking for things that spark their creativity and imagination, and also allow them to be part of creating the play pattern," Niggli said.

Parents want more from toys than simple entertainment, said Diane Goveia-Gordon, president at MGA Entertainment Canada.

"We are seeing a lot of demand from parents for toys that teach S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, art, and math)," she said. Goveia-Gordon highlights Project Mc2 fashion dolls ($29.99, Toys "R" Us), which come with experiment kits so kids can build their own lava lamp or volcano.

Other heavy hitters in the MGA line up this year include the Little Tikes Lil' Explorers Three-in-One Adventure Course ($79.90, Amazon.ca) for little ones, and the Bratz #SelfieSnaps Photobooth ($68.86, Walmart) for older girls.

Mattel has an arsenal of best sellers, but there are a few that really stick out as sure bets this year. Riza Javellana, spokeswoman with Mattel Canada, said classic toys which provide open-ended play are the go-to this year.

"Open-ended play allows each child the freedom to make play their own without rules or requirements," she said.

Top picks are the Fisher-Price Smart Toy-Bear ($124.99, Toys "R" Us), the Hot Wheels Ultimate Garage ($149.99, Toys "R" Us) and the Barbie Saddle 'N Ride Feature Horse ($59.97 Walmart).

Hasbro's list of top sellers this season is what the toymaker calls interactive and face-to-face, including: Playmation Marvel's Avengers ($119.96, Amazon.ca); the Pie Face game ($19.93, Walmart); and Play All Day Elmo ($59.94, Walmart).

Catherine Belknap and Natalie Telfer, who operate a mom's online club called Social Common, test drove toys for Fisher-Price.

"Toys that are innovative, and encourage both imagination and physical activity are the big trend," Belknap said.

Telfer said they really like Bright Beats Dance & Move BeatBo ($49.99, Toys "R" Us).

"It's perfect for creating a family dance party," she said.

Kids want toys that are fun while parents are on the lookout for durable toys that both educate and encourage imaginative and physical play, Telfer said.

"We want to purchase toys that will continue to stimulate them as they grow, and hopefully keep their attention for more than a few months the playroom," added Belknap.

1. Project Mc2 Fashion Dolls ($29.99, Toys "R" Us)
2. Bright Beats Dance & Move BeatBo ($49.99, Toys "R" Us)
3. Little Tikes Lil' Explorers Three-in-One Adventure Course ($79.90, Amazon.ca)
4. Barbie Saddle 'N Ride Feature Horse ($59.97, Walmart)
5. Playmation Marvel's Avengers ($119.96, Amazon.ca)

metro SPORTS
Weekend, November 20-22, 2015

Votes pour in for Bringer of Rain

Josh Donaldson became just the second Blue Jay to be named the American League's top player.
NATHAN DENETTE/
THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB

Writers agree with Toronto fans' MVP chants

Josh Donaldson heard the MVP chants rain down on him from the Rogers Centre crowd for much of the 2015 season.

While Toronto fans got their wish Thursday night as the Blue Jays third baseman was named the American League MVP, Donaldson said he never let the crowd noise affect his play.

"I remember the first time I heard it and it was kind of like, 'OK these guys are starting to get pretty serious about what's going on here,"' Donaldson said on a conference call. "I recognized that I was having a pretty good season at the moment ... but I understood too that there was a lot of season left and my goals aren't necessarily to win MVPs but to help my team win.

"When I was in Oakland (the fans) started (chanting) for me as well and sometimes I would almost let it become a distraction — not to the point where I was nervous about them chanting that, but I wanted to come through so much for them ... I would almost put more pressure on myself," he added.

"This year I understood ... I stayed focused on the task at hand, which was winning games, and I was able to accomplish that."

> **The best of the best!!! Without a doubt!!!**
> Jose Bautista (@JoeyBats19) in a tweet after Donaldson won AL MVP

Donaldson hit .297 with a league-best 123 runs batted in to help the Blue Jays to their first AL East title — and first playoff appearance — since 1993.

The 29-year-old beat Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout for the honours.

What was characterized as a close race leading up to Thursday's announcement turned out to be an easy win for Donaldson, who took 23 first-place votes and seven second-place votes.

Washington Nationals outfielder Bryce Harper was a unanimous choice as National League MVP. Harper became the youngest unanimous MVP winner in baseball history, capturing the NL award despite his Washington Nationals missing the playoffs.

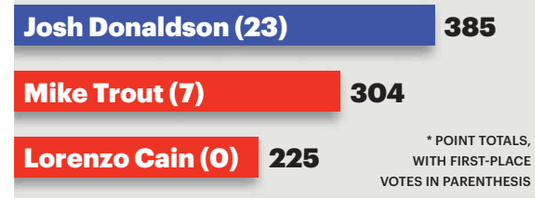
Harper turned 23 on Oct. 16, after the playoffs had already started. He got all 30 first-place votes from members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

Donaldson joined 1987 winner George Bell as the only Blue Jays players to be named AL MVP.

"Enjoy the club, man," Bell said in a video message sent out by the Blue Jays. "I'm glad for you, for your family and for Toronto Blue Jays fans."

THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COUNTING THE BALLOTS



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St-Pierre can feel for routed Rousey

UFC

Former champ had to get over his 'nightmare' upset to Serra

Holly Holm, left, lands a punch on Ronda Rousey during their title fight in Australia. ANDY BROWNBILL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Georges St-Pierre feels (Rowdy) Ronda Rousey's pain like perhaps no other. Eight years before Rousey was dethroned by Holly Holm at UFC 193, St-Pierre lost his welterweight crown to Matt (The Terror) Serra at UFC 69 in a shocking upset of his own.

A happy-go-lucky sort, Serra (8-4) had to win a season of The Ultimate Fighter reality TV show devoted to veterans making a comeback just to earn a title shot. St-Pierre, then 13-1 as a pro, was a 10-1 favourite to dispatch Serra.

The younger Montreal MMA star had just avenged a 2004 loss to Matt Hughes, widely viewed as the greatest welterweight champion ever, to claim the 170-pound crown at UFC 65 in November 2006. Serra needed just three minutes 25 seconds in April 2007 to dethrone St-Pierre in his first title defence. "This is my worst nightmare," St-Pierre said that night in Houston.

The previously unbeaten Rousey, who went into last weekend's fight as MMA's reigning rock star, is living her own nightmare now — a 20-1 favourite left unconscious and bleeding.

"It's unfortunate for Ronda but I'm happy for Holly at the same time," St-Pierre, who like Holm had coach Greg Jackson in his corner, said in an interview Thursday.

"In this game, no one's invincible," he added. "Sometimes you zig when you should zag." St-Pierre lost his confidence along with his championship belt, but eventually remade both his game and the people around him.

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OMG: MARY J. BLIGE ENCOURAGES 'NO MORE DRAMA'

R&B star Mary J. Blige is hoping she can offer love and support to those who "are sitting in their car in traffic about to jump out and kill somebody or kill themselves" with a positive and inspirational radio show.

The singer, who launched Real Talk this month on Apple Music's Beats 1 Radio, said she wants to motivate fans with her show.

"So many people out there are hurting and there are so many people I wish I could ... give a word of encouragement to," Blige said in an interview last week. "If I can reach somebody and say, '... You're beautiful and I go through the same things, too, and right now I'm thinking the same thing' — it means so much to them."

Blige, 44, added that if she "could have had Michael Jackson on a radio station back then, or had Janet Jackson talk to me when I was growing up, it would have meant the world to me."

Each episode of her show will be named after songs by Blige, whose hits include Not Gon' Cry, Real Love, Family Affair and No More Drama. Her first show, My Life, looked back at her 1994 album of the same name.

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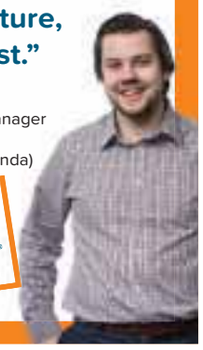

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
Know when to push for what you want but also when to back off. With both the Sun and Mercury moving into one of the best areas of your chart it won't take much to get the good things in life.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
It will be easy to get impatient today but with Mercury's entry into the area of your chart that governs joint financial matters you'll need all your energy for more important issues.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Work hard but once you reach your targets reward yourself with plenty of rest and relaxation. Also, don't be too eager to confide your fears to people you don't know if you can trust.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Bring what you've been working on to a conclusion and you will have accomplished something truly worthwhile. The Sun in Scorpio unleashed the creative side of your nature — now enjoy the rewards.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You will have to deal with a rather emotional situation today, one that threatens to bring grievances to the surface. You must face your inner demons as well as external enemies.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You will be remarkably persuasive today: your way with words will win over everyone. You will also have to deal with situations that call for a more hands-on approach.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Money doesn't have to be the center of your universe but you do need to make sure you get what you deserve. You've worked long and hard — don't let others take the benefits from you.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Do something dramatic before the Sun moves out of your birth sign on Sunday. Any doubts you've had must be swept away. If it feels right to you then it does not matter what the rest of the world thinks about it.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
There is something you need to clear up before the Sun moves into your sign at the weekend. This is the one and only chance you will get, so don't waste it.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may be wondering why everyone is being so nice but don't let your doubts hold you back. You are liked and everyone wants to help.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may be a recluse but you need to get engaged with the world. If you approach someone in a position of power with a request there is every chance it will be granted, so what are you waiting for?

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Your confidence has been sky-high and you certainly won't be afraid to take chances. That the possibility of failure never enters your mind means that success is more likely — maybe even guaranteed.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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RECIPE Grilled Ham Apple and Cheese Sandwich

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

You made it to Friday! You deserve this amped up grilled cheese with salty ham and sweet apple.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
- 4 pieces whole grain bread
- 2 Tbsp butter, softened
- 4 slices ham
- 1 cup cheddar, grated
- 1/2 Granny Smith apple, thinly sliced
- 1 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp yogurt
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard

Directions
1. Mix the mayo, yogurt and mustard in a small bowl.
2. Warm up a large skillet to medium heat. Butter one side of two pieces of bread and place them bread butter side down in the pan. Spread the mayo mix evenly across the upward facing slices while they're in the pan.
3. Divide the cheese in half and sprinkle over bread. Now lay two slices of ham onto each slice. Now add a layer of apple slices. Top with the other pieces of buttered bread, butter side out.
4. Place a small frying pan or plate over the sandwiches and then top it with something heavy, like a can of tomatoes. Check to see if it's ready to flip after the first piece of bread has been in the pan for about five minutes. When it looks crisp and golden, flip over and repeat the pressing action. Cook on the other side about another five minutes, but keep an eye on it. Remove sandwiches from the pan, slice in half and serve.

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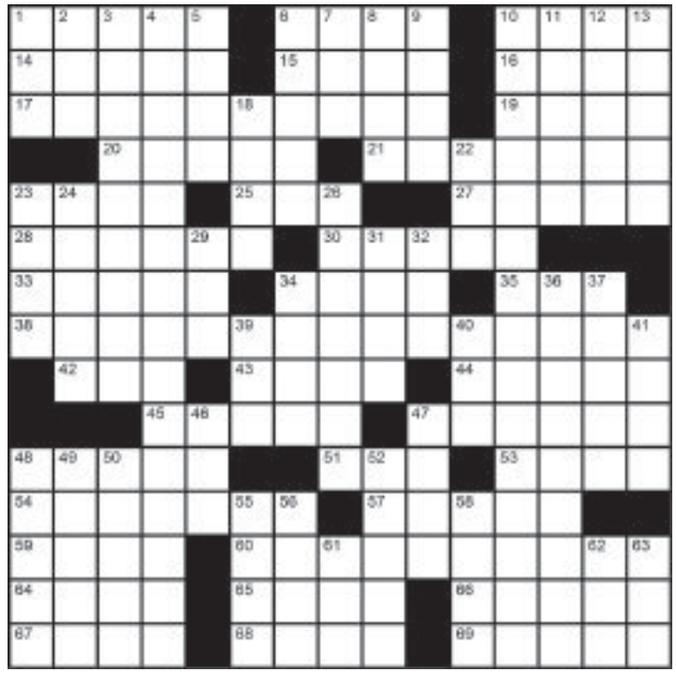
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Glassmaking ovens
6. "_ with Anna Olson" on Food Network Canada
10. Nature's green carpeting
14. Projecting window
15. Online auction site
16. Tom Jones' "_ _ Should Ever Leave You"
17. Hit tunes, TV shows, Bestsellers, etc.: 2 wds.
19. Talk
20. Springy sticks
21. Driveway surface
23. Hershey's treat
25. "Case of the Ex" songstress
27. Willie of '80s sitcom "Charles in Charge"
28. "See? Isn't that eggsactly what I said?": 2 wds.
30. Wire
33. "Family Ties" mother
34. US crash-investigating agcy.
35. Calif. NBA team
38. Traditional handcrafted blankets: 2 wds.
42. Sun. church delivery
43. Amazes
44. Piece of land
45. Greek mythology shield
47. Band-Aid injury
48. Mine entrances
51. '1000 Forms of Fear' songstress
53. "The Lion King" (1994) lioness
54. Canadian city with the slogan 'Our Tide Is Rising'
57. _-examination
59. Sacred symbol of ancient Egypt
60. Persuasive marketing spiel: 2 wds.
64. Lacquered metalware
65. "Lean _ _" by Bill Withers
66. "Be _ _ and get..." (Sugary request starter)
67. Angry snits
68. Without
69. Flavour-adders to dishes

DOWN
1. Shear
2. 'Ranch' suffix
3. Montreal... Louis-_ Lafontaine Bridge-Tunnel (St. Lawrence River crossing)
4. Sound effects from the DJ's turntable: 2 wds.
5. Garden invader
6. American flag seamstress, _ Ross (b.1752 - d.1836)
7. _ Dhabi
8. Songwriter Ms. DioGuardi
9. Optometrist's study
10. Toronto-born actor whose credits include "Total Recall" (1990), "The Perfect Storm" (2000) and Canadian outlaw biker gang miniseries "The Last Chapter": 2 wds.
11. Slice _ _ (Carnivore's sandwich ingredient)
12. Sedimentary rock
13. Cobblestones
18. Casa _ (Toronto attraction)
22. Chum
23. Footprint
24. Caffeine nuts
26. Rachel McAdams' profession
29. Repeated word in "She Loves You" by The Beatles
31. Questions
32. Lettered sauce
34. "_ _ get it!" (Aha! moment)
36. Carving material
37. Mil. rank: 2 wds.
39. "_ the Dog" (1997)
40. _-Aztecan languages
41. Plato's promenade
46. Cornerstone abbr.
47. Taverns
48. Family of Italian violin makers
49. Blood giver
50. Linen tape for trimmings
52. Slurpee-like frozen beverages
55. Bears: Spanish
56. Cute-style grandmother
58. Colourful fish
61. Alphabetic trio
62. Taxi
63. Timecard abbrs.

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